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DEATH OF A 'FRIEND'

The assassination of Anwar el-Sadat was, of course, sad and bad news, but the official U.S. reaction to it was inappropriate and ominous. The frequent recourse to the word "friend" by the officials reacting was the problem. President Ronald Reagan called Sadat a friend. Jimmy Carter of Camp David fame said, incredibly, that Egypt's dictator was his closest "personal friend."

Nations can have no friends. Allies, yes. Temporary collaborators for limited policy purposes, of course. But the sentimental, media-inspired notion that national policy should have anything to do with friendship is a dangerous delusion. Does peace in the Middle East now depend on Sadat's successor becoming a pal of Reagan and Begin? Policy must be built on a more solid foundation than personal intimacy with the current occupant of the Pharaoh's throne.

Advancing the Camp David process toward a genuine settlement is the real challenge to American, Arab and Israeli leaders. That would be the appropriate way to memorialize the best qualities of the fallen Egyptian leader. Disturbing as the prospect may be for Reagan and Co., a more popularly based or even a democratic regime may be what they will have to deal with now that Sadat is gone. His successor, Hosni Mubarak, is, unlike Sadat when he took power, a true nonentity.

U.S. policy in the Middle East has as its first principle the notion of an anti-Communist triad composed of Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Awacs aside, the Saudis don't buy that, witness Crown Prince Fahd's attack on Washington for trying to "establish military alliances which support evil and deny justice to the Palestinians." Washington must get serious about the Middle East, drop its anti-Soviet crusade and consider the real interests of the people living there. Otherwise the killing will go on.

SOLIDARITY'S ROUGH ROAD

Gustaw
Moszcz

SPOOKS' LIB

Eve Pell

AFTER TITO, THE FREEZE

Mihajlo
Mihajlov

I.P.S. DEFAMED?

Joshua
Muravchik
Aryeh Neier

BARTHELME'S '60 STORIES'

Charles
Newman

'LITERARY DEMOCRACY' Jackson Lears

THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL

HOW THE U.S. AND BUSINESS COOPERATED

MARK GREEN AND
STEVEN SOLOW

Commerce Department documents recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that more than 1,000 of America's leading companies, including General Electric, Texas Instruments, Westinghouse and Du Pont, took part in the Arab boycott of Israel. And when questioned in a random survey about compliance with the boycott, several companies lied about their participation. The American Can Corporation, Bendix International, General Mills and the Scott Paper Company, among others, directly contradicted statements they had made in confidential "Exporter's Reports" they were required by law to file with the Commerce Department [see box on page 378].

The newly disclosed documents also reveal that from 1965 to 1977, when official U.S. policy prohibited American companies from complying with the boycott, the government ignored its own policy, encouraged firms interested in doing business with Arab nations to observe the boycott and, in at least one instance, took part in the boycott itself.

More than 1,400 U.S. companies complied with Arab boycott requests during the twelve years the antiboycott policy was in effect. Establishing that simple fact was the culmination of three and a half years of legal effort. The project began in March 1977, when one of the authors and the Public Citizen Litigation Group filed a Freedom of Information Act suit against the Commerce Department to obtain Exporter's Reports filed by American firms that had been asked by Arab nations to cooperate in their

(Continued on Page 376)

AN EXCHANGE.

Was the I.P.S. Defamed?

Wheaton, Md.

In his article "An Open Letter to *The Times Magazine*" [*The Nation*, May 30], Aryeh Neier misrepresents my article about the Institute for Policy Studies ("The Think Tank of the Left," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 26). Ironically, he does it in just the same ways that he falsely accuses me of having misrepresented I.P.S. He criticizes my article on five points.

(1) In the effort to show that I misused Richard Barnet's words that the Soviet Union is a "status quo power," Neier presents two segments of a transcript of my interview of Barnet, which he introduces with the announcement: "Here is what Barnet actually said." Both segments as rendered by Neier omit important words, in one case with the use of an ellipsis.

In the first quote Neier gives the following: "I think it is a country that has incredible domestic problems . . . it is fundamentally . . . in Kissinger's terms, a status quo power." The full quote is: "I think it is a country that has incredible domestic problems and is fundamentally looking for a stable relations (sic). It is fundamentally . . . in Kissinger's terms, a status quo power." (Emphasis added.)

In the second quote, comparing U.S. and Soviet behavior, Neier gives: ". . . I think the causes and analysis are slightly different. The effects are not different." Neier has dropped a word from the last sentence. Barnet said: "The effects are not too different." (Emphasis added.) Both omissions are material to the point at issue.

[Paragraph deleted.]

When Barnet told me that "the Soviet Union has been much more reactive than many interpretations of their policy would indicate," I asked him whether he would term the USSR "imperialist," a label which he had, without qualification, applied to the United States in his books. He said: "It depends what you mean. That word covers a multitude of definitions." This contrasted sharply with his flat assertion, in *Roots of War*, that: "By any historical definition the United States is an empire." The quote I used was an accurate quote and it was precisely reflective of the world view expressed repeatedly in Barnet's writings.

(2) Neier writes:

Muravchik writes that "Barnet and some of his colleagues have also praised postwar Vietnam, and Cambodia under Pol Pot." Barnet has had too many "colleagues" over the years for me to try to check that reference.

The sentence of mine, in isolation, might well be read to mean that Barnet praised Cambodia. But no one reading my article would have come away with that misimpression.

The sentence was followed by quotes from Barnet and Cora Weiss praising the government of Vietnam, and then by quotes from I.P.S. associate fellows Gareth Porter and Malcolm Caldwell praising Cambodia under Pol Pot. It was unmistakably clear that the sentence which Neier quotes was simply an introduction to these two separate sets of quotes. His statement that there had been "too many 'colleagues' . . . to try to check that reference" is disingenuously designed to give the impression that the article's mention of Cambodia gave no specific reference.

(3) On Soviet human-rights practices, the implication of what I wrote was not, as Neier claims, that Barnet prefers Soviet practices to American ones, but that he goes out of his way to cast Soviet practices in their best light and U.S. practices in their worst. I quoted Barnet's comparison of "a steady decline in official respect for human rights" in the U.S. with his observation of "some improvement" in human rights in the U.S.S.R. since Stalin's day. This comparison is grotesque. . . . Barnet's counterposition of Soviet progress to American regress, delivered in the context of a plea to the U.S. government to stop "hectoring" the Soviet Union about human rights, was designed to obscure or minimize the essential and enormous difference between the two countries.

Moreover, the time frames of the comparison have been rigged to make the U.S.S.R. look better and the United States look worse. Sure, Soviet human-rights practices have "improved" since Stalin's day. But so have U.S. practices. Thirty years ago the U.S. was in the throes of McCarthyism. U.S. practices, says Barnet, have grown worse in the mid-1960s and 1970s. If they have, so have Soviet practices, which have grown constantly harsher since the relatively liberal Khrushchev period. In short, only by comparing a thirty-year Soviet trend to a ten-year U.S. trend is Barnet able to make it come out that things in the U.S.S.R. are getting better while in the United States they are getting worse. It was this blatant double standard, and the inaptness of the comparison in the first place, that made his formulation worthy of quotation.

Incidentally, I did not "shade . . . the meaning." The quote needed to be shortened, but in shortening it I left in Barnet's harshest words about the Soviet Union—the reference to its having been a "giant concentration camp"—so as to make clear that he is no admirer of the Soviet system. If I wanted to shade meanings by leaving out words, I'd begin by taking lessons from Neier. Neier writes:

[Barnet's] article also refers to "the brave and remarkable men who have become prominent Soviet dissidents" and

characterizes Soviet treatment of them as "reprehensible" and "outrageous." Those passages are not mentioned by Muravchik.

Had I mentioned these passages, it would only have confirmed the impression that Barnet was seeking to make little of Soviet abuses while besmirching the United States. Barnet's full passages read:

It is a popular policy to support the brave and remarkable men who have become prominent Soviet dissidents because it fits the familiar model of U.S.-Soviet competition. Watching the Soviets squirm as world attention is focused on the Ginsburg, Bukovsky, and Sakharov scandals is in the tradition of the propaganda wars of the past.

And:

This does not mean that Moscow's treatment of the Soviet dissidents is anything but reprehensible. . . . Denying Andrei Sakharov a decent apartment—a front page story a few days ago—is outrageous and petty, but is it a more serious human rights problem than the largely unreported assassinations that take place in Rhodesia almost every week?

(4) Neier quotes me as saying that "I.P.S. has not addressed human rights problems in Cuba." He then attempts to give the impression that I based this assertion on the failure of the I.P.S. to include Cuba in a complaint it filed with the United Nations about human rights in the Americas. He then says that I failed to mention that the complaint in question concerned the treatment of indigenous peoples and was thus not germane to Cuba. Ergo, I was falsely implying that I.P.S. is soft on Castro.

The quote Neier uses is only a small fragment of a sentence which gives a meaning quite different from the full sentence, yet Neier does not even use an ellipsis to show that something is missing from his quote. The full sentence reads:

Mrs. Letelier [Director of the I.P.S. Human Rights Project] explained that "the countries we take in consideration are the countries where the U.N. has issued reports on human rights," and that, for this reason, I.P.S. has not addressed human rights problems in Cuba.

This sentence makes it clear that the reference which followed to I.P.S.'s U.N. complaint was not intended to show that I.P.S. avoided criticizing Cuba about human rights. That fact had already been established by Letelier. The unmistakable import of the reference was that it contradicted the reason she gave for this avoidance, namely, the claim that I.P.S. has a policy of always waiting for the United Nations to take the initiative on human-rights questions. This is hard to square with the fact that I.P.S. had taken the initiative of bringing certain human-rights questions to the United Nations concerning countries other than Cuba.

(5) Neier writes: "According to Muravchik" (Continued on Page 379)

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EDITORIALS.

Haitian Blockade

According to an international treaty ratified by the Senate in 1968, which has the same force as any U.S. law, "No contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened." President Ronald Reagan seemed to have this treaty in mind when he recently ordered the Coast Guard to stop and board vessels suspected of carrying Haitians to the United States. This is not to say that the President complied with the law. He did not. He paid lip service to the

law and, simultaneously, proclaimed a way to evade it.

The President said, "No person who is a refugee will be returned without his consent." Repatriation will be carried out in accordance with "our international obligations concerning those who genuinely flee persecution in their homeland." But the procedure for determining who is genuinely fleeing persecution is another matter. The "hearings" are to take place on a Coast Guard boat on the high seas. Two officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service will be on hand, along with some Haitian naval officers. There will be no lawyers aboard to represent the refugees, however, and no record will be made of the proceedings.

SEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Johnson City, Tennessee

Those who this drumhead court decides are not sincerely fleeing persecution will be handed over to President-for-Life Jean Claude (Baby Doc) Duvalier's police or to the *Volontaires de la sécurité nationale*, better known as the *tontons macoutes*. The lucky ones will be tried under the Haitian law that makes it a crime to enter or leave the country without the proper documents.

President Reagan's true intention was revealed in a provision of his order requiring that Operation Forced Repatriation take place "only outside the territorial waters of the United States." Once a refugee is inside U.S. borders, he or she may obtain legal assistance and claim asylum. On the high seas, the President's lawyers probably advised him, U.S. immigration personnel can say that they obeyed the law, and there will be no legal checks on their conduct. The callousness of I.N.S. officers toward the Haitians—even within the United States—has already been documented in the course of lawsuits brought by many refugees. Can the officers be expected to behave any better away from judicial scrutiny?

Ironies abound in the President's new Haitian refugee policy. The United States led the world in denouncing Asian nations that refused to accept the Indochinese boat people. Today, the United States frequently denounces the Soviet Union for denying its people the right to leave their country. Members of the Administration who distinguish between abuses of human rights in totalitarian and authoritarian countries say that denial of the right to emigrate is a hallmark of totalitarian regimes. By this criterion alone, Haiti qualifies as totalitarian. Yet these same people insist that few Haitians attempting to enter the United States are fleeing persecution.

Persecution is endemic in Haiti, and its pervasiveness has been documented in reports prepared by Amnesty International, the Organization of American States Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the U.S. State Department. These documents make chilling reading. The Inter-American Commission's most recent report on Haiti, for example, contains a list of 151 prisoners who died under suspicious circumstances. The Haitian government's response to an inquiry by the commission about these prisoners went as follows:

Within its means, the Haitian government has always provided medical and other care to prisoners. Doubtless, some individuals were unable to accustom themselves to the prison system, and a number of deaths resulted from this, which is to be deplored. Moreover, the individuals whose names appear on the list sent to us are dangerous terrorists responsible for numerous acts of vandalism; some of them died, weapons in hand, during altercations with the forces of order.

Haiti refused to give the commission any further information about the prisoners, or even confirm their names. As for "freedom of inquiry, opinion, speech and dissemination of thought" in Haiti, the commission says they "do not exist."

Summarizing the evidence he had heard in a 1980 Federal court case involving Haitian refugees, Judge Lawrence King wrote, "A largely uncontradicted pattern emerged. Upon

return to Haiti, persons whom the Haitian government views as political opponents will be mistreated. Persons who have fled Haiti and sought asylum elsewhere are seen as opponents of the Duvalier regime. They are taken to Cassernes Dessalines for questioning. Many more are further imprisoned and persecuted. Of those allowed to return home, many more are later imprisoned or persecuted." Despite such findings, and despite the notoriety of human-rights abuses in Haiti, we can be certain that the I.N.S. officers on Coast Guard boats cruising the high seas with Baby Doc's naval officers will discover few, if any, genuine refugees fleeing persecution. President Reagan's executive order is a shabby device for evading a humanitarian law, and it can only heap more suffering on the backs of the Haitian people.

The President says that the United States is complying with its legal obligation not to "return a refugee in any manner to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened." Some repatriated Haitians might be inclined to contradict the President, but he need have little concern on that score. Nothing further will ever be heard from them.

Misguided Missile

President Ronald Reagan finally unveiled his proposal for basing the MX missile, and it looks as if the elephant has labored mightily—and produced a lethal mouse. Instead of the elaborate, expensive and environmentally destructive shell game in the Nevada-Utah desert, many of the first 100 MXs off the assembly line will be placed in silos now holding Minuteman and soon-to-be-retired Titan missiles. And possible alternative sites for the MX will be investigated, with a final decision expected by 1984. By the time it is deployed, the MX will have become the most expensive and the most studied weapon system in U.S. history.

Three comments can be made on the Reagan decision. First, it is clearly a response to citizen pressure in Nevada and Utah and to the organizing efforts of anti-MX groups throughout the country. In the face of a massive selling job by the Pentagon, opponents of the Nevada-Utah basing scheme kept plugging away, their numbers growing, and they finally pushed such conservative stalwarts in the Senate as Paul Laxalt and Jake Garn behind the plan eventually chosen. In addition, the President accepted one of the main arguments of MX critics, namely that since the Soviet Union can build warheads more cheaply than the United States can build new shelters in the desert, a Soviet attack could, in theory, overwhelm any system this country might build.

Second, the decision ignores the problem of the vulnerability of the Minuteman missiles. If Soviet missiles are capable of destroying a hardened Minuteman silo, they can destroy an MX silo. Putting an MX in a Minuteman silo is a tacit admission that the vulnerability problem has been overstated, a view argued with increasing frequency in re-

cent months by experts both within and outside the military establishment. Ironically, at the same time that Reagan canceled the multiple-shelter plan for the MX, he authorized production of the B-1 bomber, which will cost upward of \$30 billion and be obsolete before it is deployed.

The third key feature of the Reagan decision is its emphasis on the MX as part of a strategy of fighting, or at least threatening to fight, a limited nuclear war—the more important, though less publicized, rationale for the new missile. The decisions to produce the Trident II missile, to introduce nuclear cruise missiles into the Navy, to expand the air-launched cruise missile force planned for the Air Force and to speed research on antiballistic missiles are all consistent with this policy. Thus, one result of Reagan's decision will be to force a public debate on the issue of limited nuclear war. There are signs this is already happening. The October 5 issue of *Newsweek*, which was published before the President's announcement, featured a long article on the MX and the nuclear arms race that emphasized the limited nuclear war rationale and barely mentioned the vulnerability issue. This places the debate where it belongs but also makes the stakes clear. The new generation of nuclear missiles will be seen by military planners as more accurate, more flexible—and therefore more usable—than existing weapons. And nuclear war will be one step closer.

DAVID GOLD

David Gold is director of military research at the Council on Economic Priorities and co-author, with Christopher Paine and Gail Shields, of Misguided Expenditure: An Analysis of the Proposed MX Missile System (Council on Economic Priorities).

Pentagon Puffery

The most newsworthy thing about "Soviet Military Power," a glossily illustrated manual of Soviet machinations, is not that the Pentagon has published propaganda—it has been doing that since the year one. It is that the propaganda is so tacky. I really expected more from the Reagan Revolution than this.

"Soviet Military Power" is so unprofessionally done that it would barely convince the faculty at the Army War College. Certainly *The New York Times* was not taken in; it unleashed national security correspondent Leslie Gelb to catalogue the report's faults on the front page. We can conclude either that the Defense Department has been infiltrated by K.G.B. disinformation agents cleverly sabotaging the Pentagon's effort to magnify the Soviet threat by making it look ridiculous or that it believes the methods that sell aspirin can be used to sell war.

In this regard, the timing of the Pentagon publication, which came out the same week that the Administration announced its plans for the MX missile and the B-1 bomber, was no accident. The ad men in the White House borrowed a technique routinely used on Madison Avenue to launch a new product—the saturation campaign. Blanket the media

with the message and hope the sheer din will make the public take notice.

Operating on the assumption that the American people are the most gullible on earth, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and associates clearly expected "Soviet Military Power" to smooth the way for the Administration's planned increase in the military budget at the expense of social programs. But every ad man has his Edsel. The Pentagon's venture into publishing is likely to be as successful as its attempts to design an M-1 tank. The Reagan Administration, like the Johnson Administration, has seriously misunderstood the American public's attitude toward the military, in part because that attitude is too contradictory to register in public opinion polls.

Americans are second to none in their desire to manifest national strength. Belligerence, not violence, is as American as apple pie. Believing that this hawkishness can be translated into support for increased military spending, Presidents often seek high defense budgets, which enable them to buy off the right. But while it is true that Americans want their country to be strong, they are ambivalent about paying the costs. In the Johnson years, the American people turned on the Vietnam War once they realized that it meant the death of their sons. In the age of Reagan, Americans are beginning to question the latest Pentagon spending spree as they find that it means inflation and high interest rates.

"Soviet Military Power" represents a surprising arrogance on the part of the Reagan Administration that is out of keeping with its usual nice-guy image. The booklet is a dare: if we can sell this, the Administration and the Pentagon seem to be saying, we can get those suckers to believe anything. They are wrong. If this Administration persists in asking the American people to accept drastic cutbacks in social services and high interest rates for the sake of high military spending, it will find its cries of a Red menace falling on increasingly skeptical ears.

The Pentagon brochure is also reportedly intended to influence the controversy in Europe over theater nuclear weapons. Consequently, "Soviet Military Power" devotes considerable attention to Soviet weapons like the SS-20 that supposedly pose a direct threat to the Continent. Unfortunately, the authors understand Europeans even less than they do their own countrymen. It is one thing to bamboozle citizens of a nation that has not fought a war at home in more than a century. It is something else entirely to sell limited war to Europeans who believe, with considerable reason, that such a war would be limited to Europe. The opposition to the U.S. Pershing 2 and cruise missiles is broad based and growing. North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEXT WEEK

'Soviet Military Power' Facts and Fallacies

William M. Arkin
Michael T. Klare

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leaders reportedly asked Weinberger on his recent visit to Europe to give them the evidence that would convince their people of the urgency of the Soviet threat. If this booklet is the best that Weinberger could do, more than one European centrist government will be falling over the next few years.

In short, "Soviet Military Power" suggests that the Reagan Administration has been blinded by its successes in the budget and tax battles of 1981, when, because of a lucky concatenation of events that is not likely to happen again, faith triumphed over fact. Convinced that it has discovered a new formula for political miracles, the Administration is trying the same appeal in foreign policy. But this time it is asking the people to accept an increased risk of nuclear destruction. To do that one must make a factual case. This the Administration has not done—either because it cannot back up its claims or because it does not know how to. "Soviet Military Power" has as much to do with the realities of the East-West arms race as the daily dispatches in *Pravda*.

ALAN WOLFE

Alan Wolfe is a member of The Nation's Editorial Board.

Unnatural Price

Many major newspapers like *The Los Angeles Times* and *The New York Times* have been uncritically passing on to the public in plain brown editorial wrapper the Reagan Administration's propaganda in behalf of the decontrol of natural gas. The Administration's case for decontrol, which completely ignores recent developments in the energy field, comes down to five main arguments: (1) natural gas prices must be allowed to rise unchecked in order to provide adequate incentives to producers; (2) higher prices will stimulate more exploration (this is what happened when President Ronald Reagan lifted controls on oil prices in January); (3) higher prices will discourage waste and stimulate conservation of what is a limited resource; (4) price decontrol would be accompanied by a windfall-profits tax that would generate additional billions in revenues, and (5) higher prices would put natural gas on a "parity" with No. 2 fuel oil, which is now twice as costly.

The first argument assumes that, without decontrol, drillers will not seek gas. Fact: Drillers have been discovering natural gas wells at a fantastic rate in the last two years [see Cook, "Putting a Cap on Our Natural Gas," *The Nation*, July 11-18]. Sometimes as many as three discoveries in a single day are reported in *The Wall Street Journal*, and some of the wells can produce 40 million cubic feet of gas a day—enough to supply energy to 123,000 American homes.

The second argument assumes that Reagan's decontrol of oil spurred more drilling. Fact: A record 60,000 new oil and gas wells were drilled in 1980, and the pace was so frenzied that the industry ran out of rigs. Reagan's decontrol spurred nothing but prices.

The third argument is the familiar one that higher prices encourage conservation. Fact: Even with controls, natural

gas prices are so high that demand is slack. Experts in the Department of Energy and in industry admit this. Testimony at Congressional hearings in June established that consumer resistance to high prices has curtailed demand and that many wells are being capped and others not drilled for lack of customers. With current prices steep enough to hurt, higher prices can only hurt more. There is no pressing reason to hoard the natural gas we have. Based on discoveries made in the last two years and recent seismic assessments, our supplies are sufficient to last for at least fifty years, and probably for 100.

The fourth argument runs, oh, well, if natural gas prices go too high, Congress will pass a windfall-profits tax. Former President Jimmy Carter got such a tax placed on oil, and less than a year later, it was reduced substantially in the new Reagan tax bill.

The fifth argument—that natural gas prices are so low that there is no parity with No. 2 fuel oil—assumes that there should be parity. Fact: George Lawrence, president of the American Gas Association, testified in the June hearings that natural gas decontrol would *double* heating and other costs for all consumers—and make it necessary for the United States to import an additional 800,000 barrels of crude oil a day from foreign sources.

The inescapable conclusions, unmentioned in the mass media, are that natural gas decontrol would escalate prices that are already high, hamper the use of a readily available and abundant energy resource, and leave the American economy even more at the mercy of Big Oil and its Arab partners. What the nation needs is a cheaper source of energy, something that could compete with oil in the marketplace. Big Oil shudders at such heresy, and in newspapers and on television it relentlessly touts fuel oil as the best and most reliable source of heat. To make that message stick, it has to get a complaisant Administration and a weary Congress to price out of the market its most dangerous competitor—natural gas.

FRED J. COOK

Fred J. Cook, a regular contributor to The Nation, won the Newspaper Guild of New York 1980 "Page One" Award for Crusading Journalism for his series of articles on energy issues.

History Lesson

Politicians are not historians, but the dead past is often resurrected in their public statements. All too frequently on such occasions they either reveal how little they know about this nation's history or misrepresent historical events and processes.

Just last month, the revival of the Labor Day parade in New York City, the air controllers' strike and the 100th anniversary of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America provided an opportunity for two prominent political leaders to show how little they know about American history. As it happens, both men frequently speak of their ties to American labor. One was once a union presi-

dent and now serves as President of the United States. The other was once an official in the Department of Labor and now serves as New York's senior Senator.

Ronald Reagan failed his history test in his September 3 speech to the Carpenters and Joiners' centenary convention. After correctly noting that organized labor had always supported the unionization of public employees, Reagan said, "But from the very first organized labor predicated its help and support on the condition that public employees could never be allowed to strike."

The President was mistaken. In 1935, to give just one example, George Meany led a strike against the U.S. government protesting its failure to pay prevailing wage rates on Works Projects Administration jobs. And as recently as 1975, an A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention called for Federal legislation recognizing public employees' right to strike.

The President also revealed his misunderstanding of the early history of the carpenters' union. "The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners," Reagan said in his speech, "has shown time and again that it supports our free-market system." But among that union's founders and early national leaders were some of the harshest late nineteenth-century critics of the "free-market system" and American capitalism.

Peter J. McGuire, a New Yorker born in 1852 of Irish parents, is recognized as the pre-eminent leader of the carpenters' union before 1900. He was also a top organizer for the American Federation of Labor in its early days. A socialist his entire adult life, he believed in industrial as well as political democracy. McGuire's own words show how mistaken the President was about the carpenters' union and its first leaders. In 1891, the Irish-American radical had this to say about the goals of the labor movement:

To educate our class, to prepare it for changes to come, to establish a system of co-operative industry in place of the wage system, to emancipate the workers from subjugation to the capitalists, these are our ultimate objects.

Supply-siders and other conservatives may find McGuire's arguments unpalatable, but that is no reason to deny him his rightful place in history.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan failed his history test on September 7, after New York City's Labor Day parade. The American Federation of Labor, New York's Democratic Senator told CBS News that night, started Labor Day because May Day was too political and too radical. Actually, the American Federation of Labor started May Day in the early 1880s to promote the eight-hour work day. (The federation had nothing to do with Labor Day.) The idea spread to Europe as Samuel Gompers, the federation's leader, won the support of European socialists, and the Second Socialist International declared May 1 a labor holiday in 1889.

Labor Day was not intended to immunize American workers from "radicalism," and it was being observed before the American Federation of Labor was organized in 1886. Credit for the holiday actually belongs entirely to the Central Labor Union of New York. That organization was formed to support land reform in Ireland, and its leaders

were radical trade unionists. The main powers behind the first Labor Day in 1882 were the Irish-American machinist and socialist Matthew Maguire (later a Paterson, New Jersey, socialist alderman) and the ubiquitous Peter McGuire.

Trade unionists celebrated Labor Day in dozens of cities before Congress made it a national holiday in 1894. The day was always festive and always—as Peter McGuire insisted—"a demonstration of fraternity and the harbinger of a better age." At the first New York City Labor Day celebration, the marchers carried placards testifying to some of their beliefs: "To The Workers Should Belong All Wealth" and "No Man Can Make Land, Hence No Man Should Own It."

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century American historical development cannot be understood without the McGuires and the Maguires. And the teaching of history is not made any easier by political leaders who fail to do their homework.

HERBERT G. GUTMAN

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HELLO, WRITERS

As this issue went to press, so many writers had signed up to attend the American Writers Congress—more than 2,500 of them—that the organizers were forced to expand beyond the original site of the conference, the Roosevelt Hotel, and seek additional meeting space. Town Hall was rented, and other places investigated. A film crew was on hand to record the proceedings, and a late bulletin disclosed that twenty French journalists were flying in to cover the event.

What this all portended we were still attempting to sort out at press time. Woodstock? Walkouts? Or the dramatic possibility that in addition to the intangible effects of fellowship, exchanged views and shared experiences, some real actions might be taken by the Congress to address writers' common problems.

Now, our job is done, and the delegates will take over. All that remains is to thank the people who made the American Writers Congress—a project of The Nation Institute—happen. Laurels and congratulations to the Congress staff—Ann Marie Cunningham, Project Director, Kate Manning, Assistant Director, and Harry Maurer, Program Chairman. The names of all the others who helped are too numerous to mention. Hundreds of people contributed their time, ideas, money, labor and above all their invaluable moral support. Without them, there would have been no American Writers Congress. We offer them as their reward the satisfaction of having helped create an event that may have reverberations long after the detritus of plastic cups, overflowing ashtrays and crumpled resolutions is swept away.

CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

In recent weeks, the Reagan Administration has discovered that its policy on El Salvador has become unpopular with Congress, the American people and much of the rest of the world. When President José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador traveled to the United States on September 20 in a last-ditch effort to sell his package of Christian Democracy-cum-elections, his reception was lukewarm at best.

The Administration is hard pressed to find an alternative to Duarte. More than six months have passed since the furor over the State Department's white paper and the subsequent acceleration of U.S. military and economic aid to El Salvador. Now, millions of dollars and thousands of lives later, the Administration can only watch as the Salvadoran economy edges closer to bankruptcy and the junta seems farther from military victory than ever. By the end of September there were rumors in Washington that the Administration was leaning toward an endorsement of mediation, with Mexico playing the key role. President Ronald Reagan agreed to the idea, diplomatic sources say, during meetings with President José López Portillo of Mexico in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where both attended the opening of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. The same sources indicate that Reagan plans to announce the new policy at the North-South summit in Cancún, Mexico, on October 22 and 23. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders seemed to confirm that possibility when he told the House Subcommittee on Inter-American Affairs last week that there was nothing in the Salvadoran situation that precluded negotiations. But in an interview at the United Nations, Duarte, under the watchful eye of National Guard chief Col. Eugenio Vides Casanova, told Central America Watch that negotiations were out of the question. The greatest obstacle to peace in El Salvador, he said, is the Salvadoran people's "loss of faith."

Meanwhile, as domestic resistance to direct U.S. arms aid increases, the military has started exploring a variety of "backdoor" options. Last May, Col. Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez, vice president of the junta, and the ubiquitous Vides Casanova traveled to several nations in the Southern Cone to solicit support. There has long been talk in San Salvador of the "Argentine Option," in which El Salvador's military could dispense with the unpopular Christian Democrats altogether, accept the resulting cutoff in U.S. aid and replace it with arms and money from Argentina, Uruguay and Chile. There is little doubt that Argentina has already initiated some forms of military aid to the area, including sending advisers to El Salvador and Guatemala.

Retired generals Vernon Walters, Gordon Sumner and Daniel O. Graham, who are directly involved in preparing U.S. military contingency plans for Latin America, have sandwiched trips to Brazil and the Andean Pact nations between visits to Central America and the Southern Cone. Brazil has flatly rejected suggestions that it participate in a multilateral "peacekeeping force" in Central America, while the presidents of Colombia and Venezuela, who face

tough challengers in upcoming elections, have been playing hard to get. Costa Rica and Peru, among other countries in the region, pointedly avoided endorsing both the French-Mexican statement recognizing El Salvador's opposition front, F.D.R., as a legitimate political force and the Argentine statement condemning the F.D.R. Instead, they issued statements decrying violence—a political necessity, they say, for governments that have serious problems with guerrillas operating within their own borders—but coming down firmly on the side of mediation. Thus the debate over mediation versus a military solution goes on, not only in El Salvador but within the Reagan Administration and among the Latin American nations as well. It all adds up to a remarkable prelude to Cancún, where El Salvador is expected to be high on the agenda.

■ In a stunning setback for the Reagan Administration's El Salvador policy, the Senate voted on September 24 to make a \$26 million military aid package for that country subject to President Reagan's certification that certain conditions have been met. These are: that the government of President Duarte is not violating human rights, that it has achieved control over its armed forces "to bring to an end the indiscriminate torture and murder of Salvadoran citizens," that it is making continued progress on economic reforms, that it is committed to holding free elections and that it is willing to negotiate an equitable political solution with all groups in El Salvador that refrain from opposition military activity. Despite fierce lobbying by the Administration and Duarte himself, the Senate rejected a watered-down resolution that would have made the conditions merely the "sense of the Congress" rather than mandatory.

On September 23, by a 54-to-42 vote, the Senate approved some minor changes in the original amendment but left the conditions intact. According to Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Charles Percy, Duarte himself, accompanied by National Guard chief Vides Casanova, had visited with committee members the previous day. The two Salvadoran leaders asserted that they shared the objectives of the bill. The next day, however, Percy received a note from Duarte calling the conditions "an unacceptable imposition on a government friendly to the United States."

Following the September 23 vote, the White House sought to muster support for the "sense of the Congress" resolution. Vice President George Bush raced to the chamber in his capacity as president pro tem of the Senate; Haig made last-minute telephone calls to wavering senators; the Senate majority leader, Howard Baker, who had initially supported the conditions, changed his mind after breakfasting with White House officials.

But in the final vote on September 24, the Administration's version was rejected and the conditions remained in the bill. "The message of the vote is clear," said one Senate aid. "We're saying that it's the internal conditions in El Salvador we care about, not Moscow and Havana's conspiracy."

ARTICLES.

■ AFTER GDANSK II

Solidarity's
Rough Road Ahead

GUSTAW MOSZCZ

As Solidarity was marking one year of shaky survival at the first stage of its national congress in Gdansk this September, it produced a shock that reverberated throughout Eastern and Western Europe. By pledging to support free trade unions in other Soviet bloc nations, Solidarity seemed to be perilously flaunting its success at the already enraged Communist parties in those countries. Party newspapers in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and Bulgaria were united in condemning this pledge as a direct threat to "socialism."

Western commentators were equally stunned, but they viewed the resolution as a major tactical blunder. In Britain, the feeling seemed to be almost unanimous that if an invasion should come, the Poles would have brought it on themselves by their reckless disregard for "geopolitical" realities. The response of the Warsaw Pact nations was predictable, but the reaction of the "free" press was clearly inspired by a fear that the crisis in Poland might spell the end of the delicate East-West balance in Europe.

This reaction fell entirely within the acceptable bounds of capitalist thinking: liberation movements are all very well so long as they don't threaten *our* interests. Thus, Moscow and the Western European nations are one in believing that Solidarity is a threat to the status quo. Neither side likes the idea of a mass social movement undermining conventional power politics, though obviously for different reasons. Both sides desperately hope that Solidarity will make only "realistic" demands. But if Solidarity had been realistic, it would never have got off the ground a year ago last August.

The fact that most of the Western journalists calling for realism have never experienced the appalling poverty and the mindless censorship that are now the daily lot of the Poles is not important. What does matter is their failure of imagination—their inability to understand that workers are the best judges of their own situation.

Still, even with Solidarity consolidating its gains and preparing for a second year of struggle with a government bent on resisting all reform, it is difficult to be optimistic. The problems facing the Polish economy grow worse daily and are faithfully registered in the dizzying decline of the zloty. Since mid-August, the black-market exchange rate has risen from 150 zlotys to 300 zlotys to the dollar. A massive amount of surplus money is around, and with fewer goods to spend it on, Poland is on the verge of hyperinfla-

tion. Most consumer goods, including all foods except bread and tea, are rationed, either nationally or locally. Illegal practices that were once clandestine now flourish, despite joint action by the Milicja (police) and Solidarity to eradicate profiteering.

Contrary to the government's claims, the rationing system has degenerated in some regions to the point where meat lines now form the evening before stores open—which was exactly the way it was before rationing was introduced. A survey Solidarity conducted revealed that only 50 percent of the population manages to obtain its full meat ration each month. Gdansk dock workers have been involved in a boycott of meat exports, which they threaten to continue until the government increases domestic supplies. The meat rations were reduced even further during August, and coffee rationing was recently imposed. When goods are only sporadically available, the rationing system breaks down, and this has become the rule for most items.

In early July, the P.Z.P.R. (Polish Communist Party) staged its own congress, which was hailed in the Western press as an unprecedented step toward political democracy. The Poles remained skeptical; to them, the party congress offered further confirmation that the P.Z.P.R. had no plans for genuine internal reform and economic progress. From January 1 to June 3, 1980, the P.Z.P.R. gained 106,000 members and lost 26,000. From July 1, 1980, to June 15, 1981, only 28,600 people joined the party, while 308,000 members resigned. According to the Warsaw daily *Zycie Warszawy*, the party has had an overall drop in members of 6 percent, but more than 72 percent of those



DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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were workers. The majority of those who left were liberal-radicals disillusioned by the party's inability to respond to popular demands. As Bogdan Lis, vice president of Solidarity's Gdansk chapter, explained when we met recently, the P.Z.P.R. congress' appearance of being democratic was an illusion:

A lot of rank-and-file members left the party following the letter in early July from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which the central committee clearly warned the congress to abstain from radical reforms. This influenced the shape of the congress. If all those honest people hadn't left the party, we wouldn't have the situation we now face, with the authorities stiffening their opposition to Solidarity.

The P.Z.P.R. congress did purge extreme hard-liners from high posts, in favor of the "moderate" leadership of First Secretary Stanislaw Kania and Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Prime Minister. But in the Polish context, "moderation" means not favoring the use of military force to smash Solidarity. That is the extent of their liberal policies, and their grudging toleration of the trade union movement does not mean they regard Solidarity as here to stay—let alone as an equal voice in Polish affairs.

Since Kania's mid-August meeting with Leonid Brezhnev in the Crimea, the P.Z.P.R. has adopted a policy of what the editor of a dissident political quarterly described to me as "aggressive defense," that is, relinquishing no ground unless absolutely forced to—and maybe not even then. Apart from the continuing problem of the internal distribution of food and consumer goods, three issues dominate Solidarity's immediate agenda. On each of the three, negotiations between the union and the government have been broken off by the latter, to the accompaniment of warnings in the official press that by pushing too hard, Solidarity's leaders are jeopardizing the union's legal status. Actually, Solidarity was given written promises by the government that it would implement policies to meet the union's demands. Not once has Solidarity overstepped the agreement signed in Gdansk in August 1980.

Solidarity's three main concerns touch directly on those sensitive areas over which the P.Z.P.R. must show Moscow it still has control—economic management, political elections and control of the state media. Solidarity is demanding legal recognition of the workers' councils that already exist in factories throughout Poland. Moreover, the union wants the councils to be given the right to hire and fire managers in each factory. This the government cannot accept because it would signify the collapse of the *nomenklatura* system, under which the party makes all top appointments. So far, the government has agreed only that the managers of industrial enterprises will "listen to the views" of the workers' councils, a concession that Solidarity considers largely meaningless. The *nomenklatura* system is the basic mechanism by which Communist parties throughout Eastern Europe retain control over key economic and government posts. Its survival is thus fundamental to the party's continued dominance.

Even more threatening, though in a less obvious way, are Solidarity's political demands. These involve participation in local, regional and national elections, which in the past have been stage-managed by P.Z.P.R. officials and have offered candidates from the Communist Party and the Front of National Unity, a conglomeration of minor parties whose passivity has earned them official tolerance. If Solidarity gains the right to enter its own candidates, neither the P.Z.P.R. nor the front will do very well in the local and regional elections next December.

Perhaps the most visible issue is Solidarity's access to the state-controlled radio and television system. Last August, the union was promised time on the state media to present its views, but this promise remains unfulfilled. Solidarity barred state journalists from its congress in early September after the government refused it the power to accredit reporters covering the event. The Western press erroneously reported that Solidarity had demanded editorial control of state broadcasts of the congress. The union had suggested that two teams representing the government-controlled media cover the meeting, one of them appointed by the authorities and the other consisting of Solidarity members. The government quickly rejected the idea.

Access to state-run media seems a relatively trivial demand on its face. After all, the union publishes a national weekly journal with a circulation of 500,000. In addition, there are the bulletins published by the more than 280 local chapters. But none of these publications reach an audience outside of Solidarity because the state-owned newsstands are forbidden to sell them. Meanwhile, the government has recently launched a propaganda campaign placing the blame for the current food shortages squarely on Solidarity's "anti-socialist" activities. The union is too weak to counteract this media barrage, and the bulk of the population is ripe for manipulation and eager to vent its frustration on whatever target is at hand. About all Solidarity can do is threaten more newspaper strikes if the smear campaign doesn't stop. Kania responded to this threat with a warning that further disruptions could trigger the declaration of a state of emergency.

On all three issues, the scene is set for a conflict that would overshadow anything that has happened during the past year, including the threatened general strike in response to beatings of Solidarity activists by police in Bydgoszcz last March. The determination of the Polish authorities to crush the union movement is now at its peak, and there has been a nationwide outbreak of police attacks on Solidarity members—even attempted assassinations—as well as incidents of harassment at offices of local information bulletins, house searches and confiscation or destruction of union property. High-level government officials meet with Solidarity leaders as infrequently as possible, and then only to announce their intention to renege on another provision of the Gdansk agreements. Solidarity is learning painfully that the right to an independent trade union is a charade without genuine political power, and the government is proving that the right to strike cannot be freely exercised. Democracy is still a distant dream for Poland. □

■ SPOOKS' LIB

Taking C.I.A. Critics to Court

EVE PELL

Stung by critical portrayals of the Central Intelligence Agency in books and in the press, a group of retired agents has resolved to fight back in the courts. Last year, members of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers received a fund-raising appeal from one of the organization's directors, David Atlee Phillips. The letter asked the members, estimated to number about 2,500, to contribute to Challenge, a legal-action fund that sponsors lawsuits against the authors of books and articles alleging misdeeds by intelligence operatives.

Phillips, a former superspy, rose through the ranks to become the chief of the agency's Western Hemisphere Division before retiring in 1975. He recently filed a \$90 million libel and slander suit against Donald Freed, author of *Death in Washington*, and several researchers who worked on the book, which accuses the C.I.A. and Phillips of complicity in the 1976 assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C. Letelier, a minister in former Chilean President Salvador Allende's government and an opponent of Augusto Pinochet, was killed in the explosion of a bomb attached to his car. Ronni Moffitt, a passenger in the car, also died in the blast.

Phillips has also filed a \$70 million action for libel and invasion of privacy against Gaeton Fonzi and *The Washingtonian* for an article by Fonzi discussing possible links between Phillips and the assassination of John F. Kennedy as well as C.I.A. plots on Fidel Castro's life.

In his fund-raising letter, Phillips said that both non-fiction and fiction would be fair game for Challenge:

Ex-intelligence officers have been battered around in recent years, and we've taken the beating. . . . I believe a test case should be mounted against writers who defame ex-intelligence officers, dead and alive, by using their names in egregious novels.

Phillips had a particular novel in mind—*Spymaster*, also by Freed, a tale about a lusty operative who becomes Director of Central Intelligence in which real and fictional characters are intermingled.

The efforts to unite former agents behind lawsuits against the C.I.A.'s critics recall the recent wave of "blue lib" suits filed by police officers against civilians who have lodged complaints against the officers [see Pell, "Libel as a Political Weapon," *The Nation*, June 6]. Certainly, the tone taken by Phillips resembles the line taken by the police: We are just ordinary citizens defending our rights. Yet both groups have extraordinary powers, including, under certain circumstances, the right to kill, so their

"ordinary citizen" claims ring a bit hollow.

That aside, and whatever one may think of Freed's writings or Fonzi's article, the legal counteroffensive poses a danger to anyone who attempts to write about illegal acts committed by the intelligence community. And while Challenge may have no official connection with the agency or the Federal government, the lawyer representing Phillips is associated with the same firm as John Warner, former general counsel for the C.I.A. And the fund's advisory board boasts such luminaries as William Colby, former Director of Central Intelligence, James Buckley, former Senator from New York and now Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, Science and Technology in the Reagan Administration, and two retired generals.

In addition to its moves to limit the Freedom of Information Act, the Reagan Administration has demonstrated its intention to increase the freedom of the intelligence agencies and curtail the freedom of their critics. By upholding the State Department's authority to deprive former agent Philip Agee of his passport, the Supreme Court dealt another blow to the C.I.A.'s critics [see Stephen Gillers, "Reasoning Not the Need," *The Nation*, July 25-August 1]. In short, the time seems ripe for a return to the bad old days when "national security" justified covering up murder, torture and covert actions against foreign governments.

But there is a positive aspect to the libel suits filed by Phillips: they provide a golden opportunity for a thorough probe of all facets of his twenty-five-year C.I.A. career, which included service in eight countries. He will have to answer detailed pretrial interrogatories prepared by Freed and his lawyers, Melvin Wulf and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. In order to establish the truth of Freed's charges, the defense counsels will seek to establish what role, if any, Phillips played in organizing the coup that overthrew the Allende government, in recruiting anti-Castro Cuban exiles for dirty tricks and in planning clandestine operations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Should Phillips refuse to answer because of the oath not to discuss C.I.A. operations that all its employees must take, he will be unable to proceed with his suit. Should he respond to the interrogatories, his answers will provide students of intelligence operations with a mother lode of information. Conspiracy buffs like Freed will have their suspicions confirmed or denied by a source with firsthand knowledge of C.I.A. operations in Cuba, Chile, Guatemala and many other places at home and abroad.

The tactics employed by the former superspy and his attorney, James Bierbower, are worthy of note. They did not name the publisher of *Death in Washington* as a defendant, as is customary in libel actions. Clark speculates that by using the precedent established by the Supreme Court in the case of former C.I.A. agent Frank Snapp—that the earnings of an author who violates his secrecy oath may be impounded—Phillips hopes to make writers and researchers bear the entire burden of defending themselves and to deprive them of any help from their publishers.

An interesting sidelight to the controversy over Freed's work involves a review of *Spymaster* by Alfred Coppel,

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which appeared in *The San Francisco Chronicle* in June 1980. Not coincidentally, Coppel is a member of Challenge's advisory board. Freed claimed that *Chronicle* staffer Diane Levy told him that Coppel had asked to review the book; Coppel claimed that *The Chronicle* approached him. When confronted by this contradictory version, Levy said she could not remember how the assignment came about. However that may be, Coppel was hardly an objective critic, and he savaged the book.

Freed is combating the fund-raising efforts of the retired spooks with an appeal of his own. Should Phillips drop his lawsuit, Freed plans to countersue for malicious prosecution.

Are there other works on Challenge's hit list? Phillips and Bierbower refuse to say what their plans are. But the Challenge appeal mentions *Conspiracy* by Anthony Summers, *Covert Action Information Bulletin* and *Spymaster* as possible targets. A wave of "spooks' lib" suits is clearly in the offing. □

■ THE JACK ABBOTT AFFAIR

The Conning of The Literati?

SUE M. HALPERN

At least one person is gloating over the turn of events that changed Jack Henry Abbott from a new-found literary talent into a prime murder suspect six weeks after his release from prison. In her article "The Literary Life of Crime," which appeared in *The New Republic's* September 9 issue, Naomi Munson appropriates the sorry moment to deride novelist Norman Mailer, Robert Silvers, editor of *The New York Review of Books*, and others who were instrumental in getting Abbott's book, *In the Belly of the Beast: Letters From Prison*, published and him a parole. Munson's rebuke is directed less at Abbott than at those whose "newest darling" he had become: New York's literary establishment, the "fashionable intelligentsia." They should have known better than to help set this man free, Munson suggests; that they didn't was not because of blind humanitarianism but because their political beliefs made them sympathetic to Abbott's fervent profession of Communism and his capacity for violence.

Munson accuses Abbott's sponsors of having "accepted without question the underlying political message [in the book] that capitalist America is a sick and evil society." To Munson, Abbott is "nothing so much as a precocious child regurgitating—with a dash of self-conscious panache—the tired old clichés he has learned will charm his elders." She also accords him restorative powers capable of reviving "aging radical salivary glands." By "appearing on the scene at a

moment when the jaundiced view of American society had become so chic as to have lost most of its radical vigor," Munson explains, "Abbott must have seemed to hold the promise of renewal."

Given that Munson is the daughter of Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, and the wife of the public affairs director at the U.S. mission to the United Nations under Jeane Kirkpatrick, her animus against "radical chic" comes as no great surprise. Still, it is too easy to affix blame with the superior knowledge of hindsight, and not very enlightening. If, in fact, Abbott's homicidal behavior was so probable as to be predictable—a proposition that is by no means certain—then shouldn't the attention of the press be focused not on the motives of those who interceded on his behalf but on a parole system that could be pressured by a handful of literati into releasing Abbott against the advice of its experts?

Moreover, articles about the participation of the literary establishment in the Abbott affair, like Munson's, James Atlas's (also in *The New Republic*) and Michiko Kakutani's (in *The New York Times Book Review*), are, at best, merely anecdotal. While such accounts may be interesting, they simply prolong the carnival atmosphere that many found offensive from the start. And, as a result, no one gives much thought to scrutinizing what went on in Utah last spring when Abbott came up for his annual parole hearing and surprisingly—even to him, it seems—was granted a release. Lost in all the commotion is the public review of the criminal justice system that Abbott's trenchant indictment might have provoked.

Ironically, one outcome of this episode has been the wholesale rejection of Abbott's description of the state-sanctioned abuse of American prisoners, which one may call torture when practiced by a "totalitarian" country. The logic seems to be that anyone who can kill in cold blood is a criminal, criminals are dishonest, therefore what a criminal says about criminal justice is invalid. Thus Munson, for one, dismisses "Abbott's ravings about his own treatment in jail." Yet, although there are parts of his account that are exaggerated, it must be emphasized that much of what he has written is less revelation than reminder. We have already read about the corrupt power inherent in the indeterminate sentence in George Jackson's *Soledad Brother*. Edward Bunker schooled us in the prisoners' code of violence. Malcolm Braly introduced readers to the "blackout" cell. And Jessica Mitford documented some of the cruel and usual punishments such as antitestosterone hormones, brain surgery, sensory deprivation and drugs like Prolixin that take place in American prisons in the name of "behavior modification." Furthermore, if Abbott is a sample product of what prison can make of a person, should we not be concerned?

Those, like Kakutani, who find "disingenuous" the suggestion that a connection can be made between the "common" criminals populating "common" jails in America and political prisoners in the jails of other countries fail to understand the nature of the comparison: it is not based on whether or not one deserves to be imprisoned but on the

Sue M. Halpern, who writes often for *The Nation*, reviewed Jack Abbott's book, *In the Belly of the Beast*, in the July 4 issue.

treatment of those who are jailed. Deserving to be incarcerated can never mean deserving to be tortured. And surely it would be specious to assert that what is objectionable about the torture of political prisoners is that they are undeservedly being treated to punishments reserved for those who *should* be in jail.

Nations that take political prisoners forfeit the right to be called democracies. America, it is said, has no political prisoners in its prisons, only criminals. Yet whenever it permits inhuman treatment of convicts, the United States betrays its democratic ideals. The fact that those abused are common criminals is irrelevant.

If, for a brief hopeful moment, *In the Belly of the Beast* seemed likely to inspire public outrage at the criminal justice system in this country, there is little solace in knowing that Jack Abbott, who was not the first to report from this circle of hell, will not be the last. □

■ AFTER TITO, THE FREEZE

Belgrade Jails Its Dissenters

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV

Events now taking place in Yugoslavia, a country whose system of government is somewhere between "totalitarian" and "authoritarian," illustrate what can happen when the defense of human rights is used by the United States solely as an instrument in its struggle against the Soviet Union.

During the past year, the European press has published countless stories on Yugoslavia, but little has appeared in the United States. Few Americans are aware that the rate of inflation in Yugoslavia was 44 percent until price controls were imposed in June; that the Yugoslav per-capita foreign debt is higher than Poland's; that the unemployment rate is 14 percent, not counting about 1 million Yugoslav workers who have emigrated to Western Europe in search of jobs; that in the last few months, for the first time since the end of World War II, the regime has sent in tanks and troops to quell demonstrations throughout the province of Kosovo.

Immediately following Marshal Tito's death last year, hundreds of intellectuals from Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana signed petitions demanding amnesty for political prisoners, changes in the criminal code, including the removal of the paragraph on so-called verbal crimes, and permission to publish independent journals. Prominent writers and scholars have addressed open letters to the

members of the "collective leadership" that succeeded Tito and to the party leaders in Serbia and Croatia. A group was formed recently in Belgrade—Action Against Abuses of Medicine and Psychiatry—with the purpose of publicizing cases of forced hospitalization for political reasons.

The result of all this ferment has been to make Yugoslavia's leaders feel threatened. They have lashed out with more arrests and trials of dissidents and loosed a propaganda campaign against them in the press. In 1980, the writer Momčilo Selić was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment because he wrote a short article, which was never published, critical of Tito's "cult of personality." Largely because of protests in the West, Selić's sentence was reduced to three years. This year, three leading dissidents—historian Franjo Tudjman, economist Marko Veselica and poet Vlado Gotovac—were tried in rapid succession. The government's reasons were the same as always: writings that were too critical or interviews with the foreign press. The poet Gojko Djogo was given a two-year prison sentence in Belgrade recently after a collection of his poems was found to be disrespectful to Tito. Adem Demaći, the leading novelist writing in Albanian, has spent the past eighteen years in prison for verbal crimes. Yugoslavs have been jailed for bringing into the country publications of the émigré press in the West. The case of a worker named Jovo Ilić, who received a ten-year sentence for this offense in 1979, is typical. Recently, a Serbian Orthodox priest was given six years in prison for singing so-called nationalistic songs in his own home during the celebration of his son's baptism. Even job applicants must prove their "moral and political fitness," that is, their loyalty to the regime. Milovan Djilas, the best-known Yugoslav dissident and the father of the dissident movement in the Communist world,



Mihajlo Mihajlov, a Yugoslav author and scholar, was imprisoned for seven years after his writings were adjudged hostile to the regime. He has lived in the United States since 1978 and now teaches at Yale University. He is co-chairman of the Committee to Aid Democratic Dissidents in Yugoslavia.

lives a life of severe restriction, much as Andrei Sakharov did before his internment in Gorki.

Since the official numbers are unreliable, no one really knows how many prisoners of conscience there are in Yugoslav prisons; most estimates put the figure at about 1,000. Yugoslavia plays a two-faced role on human rights. At international conferences, such as those held in Helsinki, Belgrade and Madrid, its diplomats usually vote in favor of resolutions protecting human rights. Yet when inquiries are made about human-rights violations in Yugoslavia, they are rejected as an interference in the country's internal affairs. This is not surprising; Yugoslavia remains a one-party state in which dissent is not tolerated.

Because of its reliance on economic and technical aid from the West, Yugoslavia is much more sensitive than other Communist countries to Western public opinion. Precisely because of this pressure and the activities of organizations such as Amnesty International and the International League for Human Rights, the Yugoslav regime freed ten political prisoners, including several whose names had been well publicized by the Western media, during the 1977 Belgrade Review Conference on compliance with the Helsinki Accords. Reflecting the U.S. government's longstanding policy of "quiet diplomacy" and its unconditional support for the Yugoslav regime, this minimal gesture was mistakenly hailed by many in the United States as an amnesty for all Yugoslav political prisoners.

After Tito's death, there was no Yugoslav equivalent to Nikita Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's "cult of personality" at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, or to the subsequent literary "thaw" during which Alexander Solzhenitsyn and others wrote freely about Stalinist labor camps. To this day, not a word may be written in Yugoslavia about its labor camps on the Adriatic islands, which rival those of Stalin in their horrors.

Considerable attention has been paid in the Western press to the murders by Communist political police of dissidents living abroad—except those from Yugoslavia. For example, the murder of Georgy Markov, a Bulgarian émigré who was

working for the BBC in London, received wide media coverage throughout the world. But not until recently has the Western media reported the murders of Yugoslav expatriates. In the past ten years there have been thirty such murders. The majority of the victims were either owners, editors or correspondents of émigré newspapers.

There are signs that an explosion will soon take place in Yugoslavia that will be no less dramatic than the current upheaval in Poland. Rather than having to invade Yugoslavia, however, the Russians will probably be invited in by the leadership, to whom preserving their own power is the paramount concern. The United States might prevent this by exerting pressure on the present regime to liberalize. But American foreign policy continues to preserve the status quo, which means not raising human-rights issues and proping up the regime with economic aid. It would be far better if that aid were conditional upon liberalization and democratic reforms, for that is the only way the situation can be improved and the economy strengthened. As it is now, American aid is actually being wasted.

At this time of heightened tensions in Yugoslavia, when repression is on the upswing and demands for more freedom are being made by dissidents and intellectuals, the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," dated February 2, and submitted to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, does not even mention the scores of petitions by Yugoslav citizens demanding amnesty for political prisoners and a free press. While noting hopefully that a petition to establish an independent journal in Ljubljana has not yet been rejected, the report makes no mention of the Yugoslav government's ban on the magazine *Javnost* (Forum). The report also notes that the regime permitted a political prisoner to go to Switzerland for necessary surgery. What it does not say is that the prisoner, historian Davor Aras, was sentenced to six years for terrorism after writing on a wall the words "Down with terror," or that for years a number of international organizations have been pressing the authorities to allow Aras to leave the country to obtain treatment for a serious heart condition.

Despite the sparse attention paid in the United States to Yugoslavia's problems, there are a few hopeful signs. Recently, the Committee to Aid Democratic Dissidents in Yugoslavia was formed with many prominent Americans among its supporters. In response to pressure from this group, the State Department released a report prepared by Patricia Derian when she was Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs under President Jimmy Carter which acknowledged that Yugoslavia had violated the Helsinki Accords. This statement drew a sharp response from Belgrade, and the State Department subsequently retreated to its policy of avoiding public criticism of Yugoslavia.

One measure of the effectiveness of this "quiet diplomacy" is the sentence meted out in September to Croatian political economist Veselica—eleven years' imprisonment to be followed by a four-year ban on publication and public appearances. Veselica's crime was granting an interview to a Western reporter. □

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■ THE O'CONNOR PRECEDENT

Should Supreme Court Nominees Have Opinions?

SANFORD LEVINSON

Sandra Day O'Connor has been sworn in as a Justice of the Supreme Court, but her conduct during her confirmation hearings raises again an important issue that will be with us for a long time to come. That issue is the willingness of nominees to comment on cases previously decided by the Court.

This is far from a trivial matter. After all, five Supreme Court Justices are over 73, so it is quite possible that Ronald Reagan will appoint a majority of the Court before he leaves office. The 90-to-0 vote to confirm O'Connor, taken together with her reluctance to discuss her judicial philosophy as it applies to critical areas of social policy reflected in specific cases, continues dubious precedents. (In fairness to O'Connor, it should be noted that many of her predecessors, particularly in the post-World War II era, have claimed a similar exemption from substantive discussion of issues before the Supreme Court.)

In her prepared statement to the Senate Judiciary Committee, O'Connor said:

I do not believe that, as a nominee, I can tell you how I might vote on a particular issue which may come before the Court, or endorse or criticize specific Supreme Court decisions presenting issues which may well come before the Court again. To do so would mean I have prejudged the matter or have morally committed myself to a certain position. Such a statement by me as to how I might resolve a particular issue or what I might do in a future Court action might make it necessary to disqualify myself on the matter.

The bulk of the senators' questions related to *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 abortion case. Many supporters of abortion rights, I suspect, admired the way O'Connor deftly avoided revealing her views on that decision. Their admiration was shortsighted, however. It is altogether proper for senators who take their duties of advice and consent seriously to question prospective Federal judges about significant problems of constitutional law and theory. Moreover, the reasons O'Connor offered for evading politically touchy questions do not stand up.

Obviously, no nominee should promise to vote one way or the other in a future case, but that is not the issue. What the senators (and the public) wish to know is whether the nominee has devoted serious thought to the Constitution. Such reflection will inevitably lead him or her to "endorse

or criticize specific Supreme Court decisions."

Roe v. Wade was undoubtedly the most important constitutional decision of the past decade. It raised profound questions of constitutional interpretation, ranging from the ascription of meaning to the constitutional text (which does not mention "privacy," let alone "abortion") to the Supreme Court's role as enunciator of so-called "fundamental values." In addition, abortion is one of the most volatile issues in contemporary American politics. Not to have views on *Roe v. Wade* is equivalent to not having views on the nature of the Constitution itself or on the nature of the Supreme Court's role in a constitutional system. It is as if a nominee to the Court in 1860 declined to comment on the *Dred Scott* decision, to which *Roe* is comparable in its implications.

If O'Connor had views on *Roe*, she had a duty to articulate them. As a lawyer, a legislator and a judge, she had already sworn several times over to support, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. If she takes her oaths seriously, she must oppose unconstitutional acts wherever found, and by whomever committed, including her new colleagues on the Supreme Court. All she needed to say to the Senate was that her present view is that *Roe* is (or is not) a legitimate decision, leaving open the possibility that further reflection and argument will change her mind. She had no obligation to promise the senators that she would vote in a given way in a future case, but she did have the duty to tell them her current thoughts about the constitutionality of the *Roe* decision or of any other case decided by the Court.

Her argument about prejudgment is, to put it kindly, ludicrous. If taken seriously, it would disqualify all present Justices of the Court, save herself, since they have all taken vigorous public positions on the *Roe* case and those that followed it. (Can there be any doubt that Justices Harry Blackmun and William Rehnquist, to take the most obvious examples, have prejudged the abortion cases that will continue to come before the Court? More to the point, can we imagine any sitting judge *not* prejudging future cases in some significant sense?)

We also have to wonder how far O'Connor would extend her principle. What if a senator had asked her about *Marbury v. Madison*, the 1803 case in which Chief Justice John Marshall articulated the theory of judicial review of Congressional legislation? That issue will also be before the Court during O'Connor's tenure in every case in which the constitutionality of a law passed by Congress is challenged. Marshall's reasoning in *Marbury* is hardly impeccable, and it would have been interesting indeed to hear O'Connor analyze the cogency of his argument. Would it have been proper for her to profess skepticism about *Marbury*?

Many Americans were outraged when President Dwight Eisenhower refused to firmly endorse *Brown v. Board of Education*, and it is all too easy to imagine our collective reaction should a future Reagan nominee to the bench refuse to support *Brown* on the ground that school desegregation cases will continue to come before the Court and thus there should be no prejudgment of the constitu-

Sanford Levinson is professor of law at the University of Texas law school.

tional legitimacy of segregation. Loftier criteria than whose ox is being gored should govern our reactions to the questions judicial nominees are asked and to their responses (or evasions).

One also wonders how the questioning will be conducted in future confirmation hearings if O'Connor's no-comment policy is allowed to stand. For example, Robert Bork is reported to be a likely nominee to the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, and his former colleague at Yale, Ralph Winter, is a leading candidate for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Both men have written on many issues of law and have bitterly criticized specific Supreme Court decisions as usurpations of the powers of the legislative branch. Like most legal academics, including many "liberals," Bork has criticized the *Roe* decision. During testimony before a Senate committee in opposition to a bill declaring fetuses to be persons and stripping Federal courts of most of their jurisdiction to hear abortion-related cases, he made it clear that he found *Roe* indefensible. Bork has also published a controversial (and frightening) article on the limits of the First Amendment, which included assessments of cases already decided.

Similar problems are presented by Supreme Court nominees who are serving as judges on the lower Federal courts, where they routinely consider the meaning and implications of Supreme Court decisions. It is not unheard of for Federal judges to say in their opinions that they will defer to the Supreme Court's decision in an earlier case even though they disagree with it. Judge Thomas Gee of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, for example, denounced the Supreme Court's ruling in *Kaiser v. Weber*, which upheld affirmative-action plans in private industry, but went on to say that it was not so immoral that he would have to resign rather than enforce it. If he is nominated to the Supreme Court, which is not inconceivable, can one doubt his likely vote in future affirmative-action cases?

Of course it might be said that senators are politicians, not constitutional scholars. No doubt Senator John East was more interested in O'Connor's views on abortion than on constitutional theory. If so, we must demand that senators take their constitutional duties more seriously and not give judicial nominees a blank check to believe whatever they like about the Constitution.

If the Constitution is to continue to serve as the foundation of our political system, then it must be taken seriously by all actors in that system, from citizens to Supreme Court Justices. To leave constitutional interpretation to the Supreme Court is not only to engage in the most vulgar "realism"—i.e., the Constitution is (only) what the Court says it is—it is ultimately to give up the belief in a meaningful Constitution altogether.

However distasteful Senator East's political views, he was performing a public service by interrogating O'Connor, and she did not live up to her responsibilities as a potential member of our highest court. It is vital that her stonewalling not become binding precedent in future confirmation hearings. □

U.S. and Business

(Continued From Front Cover)

boycott of Israel. On October 20, 1980, then Commerce Secretary Philip Klutznick agreed to turn over ninety boxes of documents covering eleven years of boycott requests, from 1965 to 1976. These documents revealed that more than 80 percent of the U.S. companies that had filed reports—more than 1,400 out of 1,600—had acquiesced to Arab demands by supplying information requested by the Central Office of the Boycott of Israel in Damascus, Syria. Sometimes this information consisted only of statements that the company did not engage in trade with Israel. But sometimes it included promises by American firms not to allow their Jewish employees to work on business deals involving Arab nations.

It is, of course, important to note that there is nothing necessarily objectionable in economic boycotts of one country or community by another. Many critics of South Africa's apartheid system, for instance, support the idea of boycotting South African products and even of boycotting companies who trade with South Africa. In the case of the Arab boycott of Israel, however, American companies violated U.S. policy and *secretly* complied with Arab requests. They kept it secret because American firms knew it was wrong, which is very different from the public and moral posture of blacks boycotting segregated buses in 1957, or feminists refusing to hold conferences in states that have rejected the Equal Rights Amendment. Finally, the Arab embargo of Israel can be distinguished from other boycotts by the way it discriminated not only against a country but against an entire religious group. Thus American Jews were sometimes penalized by their employers simply because they were Jews.

The story begins in 1965 when the House Committee on Banking and Currency's Subcommittee on International Trade held four days of hearings on the Arab boycott, which had begun in 1948, three days after the creation of Israel. Originally it was limited to Arab countries, but it had expanded to a refusal to do business with any firms that traded with Israel. The hearings had been prompted by a pending amendment to the Export Control Act, but after listening to testimony from the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee and other Jewish groups, the subcommittee launched an inquiry into Arab influence on American business.

The Johnson Administration, however, downplayed the

Mark Green is the president of the Democracy Project, a new nonprofit "action institute," and author of the forthcoming Winning Back America: Alternatives to Reaganism (Bantam). Steven Solow is the project's administrative assistant and a writer-researcher. Funding for this piece was provided by the Fund for Investigative Journalism. The authors wish to thank Jon Glascoe of The Nation Institute for his assistance.

problem. Acting Secretary of State George Ball warned the committee that any move against the Arab boycott might undercut the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Robert E. Giles, general counsel for the Commerce Department, reported that there was no "strong business demand" for legislation limiting American corporate participation in the boycott. Because of possible "undesirable side effects" for U.S. businesses, he was opposed to any antiboycott legislation.

Confronted by this opposition from the Administration, Congress ended the hearings with a classic waffle. The Arabs, the Israelis and the business community were informed that it was U.S. policy to "oppose restrictive trade practices or boycotts . . . against . . . countries friendly to the United States." However, the committee added, companies would not be prohibited from complying with the boycott—only "encouraged and requested" not to do so. According to Frank Weil, an assistant secretary in the Commerce Department during the Carter Administration, "From 1965 to 1977, the issue of the U.S. antiboycott policy was handled by Commerce in an unequivocal fashion. There was a clear distinction between rhetoric and action that was deliberate. Thus the policy against the boycott had no effect."

For example, the Commerce Department required all American companies that received boycott requests to fill out Exporter's Reports. These were supposedly designed to collect information on the extent of Arab boycott requests to American companies and the extent of compliance with those requests. But while returning the form was mandatory, answering all of the questions was not. The final question on each form asked the company what its response would be to a boycott request; answering this was described as "helpful to the U.S. Government but . . . not mandatory."

Thus, Congress had an antiboycott policy it would not enforce, and Commerce had an information form on which an answer to the crucial question was optional.

Given this governmental confusion, the boycott flourished. In 1974, *The Wall Street Journal* wrote, "Businessmen establish their own boycott rules which are much tighter than the official boycott. To be on the safe side, they lean far over to be friendly to the Arabs even if it means being overtly unfriendly to Israel." According to *The Journal*, such unfriendliness often made it difficult for Israeli businesses to obtain foreign supplies and technology. When the Ambin Plastic Building Company in Tel Aviv sought to purchase carbon black from the Ashland Chemical Company in 1974, they were informed in a letter from the firm's export department that "dealing with Israel either directly or indirectly represents too serious a risk to even consider and [Ashland] is opposed to . . . having any contact whatsoever with any Israeli Company."

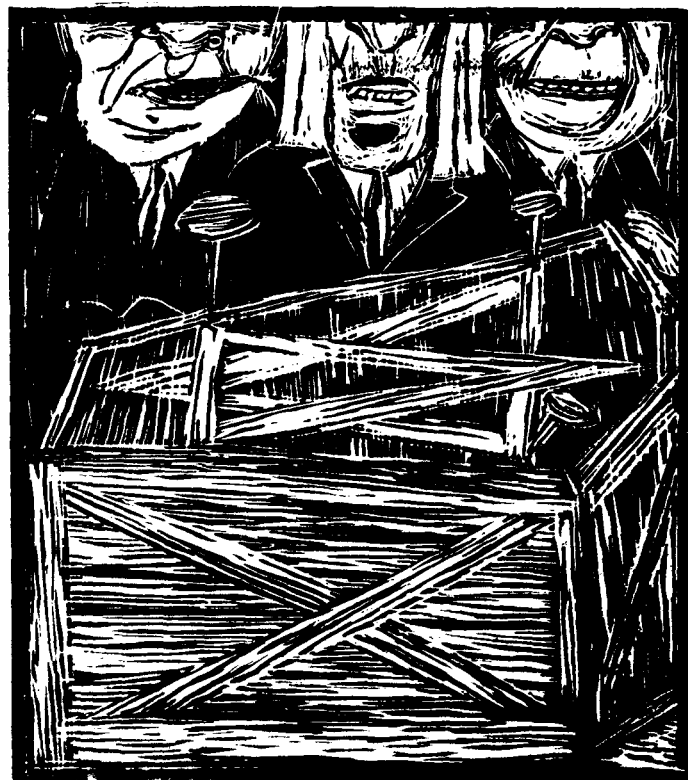
Compliance with the boycott usually required only a statement by a U.S. company trading with an Arab country that none of the goods being sold had been produced in Israel. More than half of the Arab requests sought such a "negative statement of origin." But some Arab nations imposed severer restrictions. Companies were asked if they

used ships that called at Israeli ports, for example, or if any of their employees were Jewish or had personal ties to Israel [see box on page 379].

Compliance with these various requests for information, as revealed in the Commerce Department documents, was usually in the spirit of the Caterpillar Tractor Company, which said: "If somebody wanted to do business with us and wanted us to confirm a fact . . . we did it." Caterpillar has a "Code of World Wide Business Conduct," which reads, "Ethical business conduct should normally exist at a level well above the minimum required by law." Reflecting on this code and their conduct, a company spokesman said to us, "Well, there is always the argument that one ought to do something that is somehow morally demanded."

The general counsel to a large pharmaceutical company that had complied with the boycott told us, "My thinking in the 1960s, and probably that of a lot of businessmen, was that we were prepared to say anything to the Arabs to secure business . . . if they wanted something, you gave it to them." And why not, since the Commerce Department apparently didn't mind?

Congress had entrusted Commerce with the job of keeping tabs on how widespread the boycott was, and documenting who did and did not observe it. As it turned out, Commerce encouraged cooperation. Until the end of 1975, the department made available to U.S. companies information on Arab "trade opportunities," which were conditional on conformance to the boycott. In March 1976, ten years after Congress first challenged the boycott, the department participated in a conference set up to provide American companies with suggestions of ways to evade the reporting requirements in the Export Administration Act. According to a 1976 House report, "Representatives of the Department of Com-



CORPORATE COMPLIERS . . .

The following are a few of the 1,400 U.S. companies that took part in the Arab boycott of Israel by acceding to requests from Arab states for information, certification or other actions involving restrictive trade practices: Alcoa, American Motors, American Tobacco, Bendix Corporation, Borg-Warner, Campbell Soup, Chrysler, Del Monte, Du Pont, Firestone, General Electric, General Mills, General Motors, Gulf Oil, Esso International (Exxon), Goodrich, Goodyear, Hewlett-Packard, Lockheed, Norwich Pharmacal, Parke-Davis, Penzoil, Philip Morris, Proctor & Gamble, Texas Instruments, TRW, R.J. Reynolds, Westinghouse, Valvoline. (Some of these same corporations are on the Arab blacklist, but nevertheless still responded to the boycott office's request for information "designed to support a restrictive trade practice.")

. . . AND CORPORATE LIARS

Of 120 U.S. companies we surveyed for additional information regarding their activities in the Arab boycott of Israel, only fifteen responded. Of that group, a dozen denied ever acceding to Arab requests, even though the documents they had previously filed with the Commerce Department and that we had obtained by our lawsuit showed that they had done so. (Revenue figures below are for the year 1980.)

● **American Can Corporation** Hdq. Greenwich, Connecticut. Revenues \$4.81 billion, 55,000 employees. Manufacture, distribution and sale of container and package products. In 1976 American Can filed an Exporter's Report with the Commerce Department indicating compliance with an Arab state's request.

● **Avon Products, Inc.** Hdq. New York, New York. Revenues \$2.56 billion, 34,300 employees. Cosmetics. Filed report indicating compliance in 1976.

● **Barber-Greene** Hdq. Aurora, Illinois. Revenues \$226.54 million, 3,728 employees. Asphalt plants, materials-handling equipment. Filed report indicating compliance in 1976.

● **Bendix International** (a subsidiary of **Bendix Corp.**) Hdq. Southfield, Michigan. Revenues \$4.27 billion. Manufacturer for automotive, aerospace and electronics markets. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1969, 1972, 1973 and 1976.

● **Clark Equipment Co.** Hdq. Buchanan, Michigan. Revenues \$1.53 million, 21,796 employees. Trucks, tractors, accessories. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1973 and 1976.

● **General Mills** Hdq. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Revenues \$4.17 billion, 66,000 employees. Packaged food. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1967, 1975 and 1976.

● **McCall Pattern Co.** (a subsidiary of **Norton Simon Corp.**) Hdq. Manhattan, Kansas. 1,000 employees. Publishes fashion patterns. Filed report indicating compliance in 1976.

● **Martin Decker Corp.** (Division **Cooper Industries**) Hdq. Santa Ana, California. Sales \$30 million (in 1979), 664 employees. Oil well drilling and control instruments. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1968 and 1976.

● **Mine Safety Appliance Co.** International Division. Hdq. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Revenues \$305.5 million, 6,350 employees. Safety and process control equipment. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1975 and 1976.

● **Mirro Corp.** Hdq. Manitowac, Wisconsin. Revenues \$146.99 million, 2,996 employees. Aluminum cooking utensils, siding, fiberglass and aluminum boats. Filed report indicating compliance in 1976.

● **Scott Paper Co.** Hdq. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Revenues \$2.08 billion, 20,800 employees. Home and industrial paper products. Filed reports indicating compliance in 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974 and 1975. In 1976 Scott Paper filed a report indicating that they had refused to comply with a request.

● **Zippo Manufacturing Co.** Hdq. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 600 employees. Cigarette lighters. Filed report indicating compliance in 1976.

M.G. & S.S.

merce were present and provided at least tacit approval of some of the avoidance techniques discussed." The subcommittee later reprinted a memorandum prepared by the Business International Corporation (the sponsor of the conference) which asserted that members of both the Commerce and State departments gave companies pointers on how they could avoid the reporting requirements of the Export Administration Act.

Beyond complicity in the very practice it was assigned to monitor, the department's "data reported quarterly and in special reports to Congress was generally meaningless and almost always inaccurate," according to the subcommittee. The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress analyzed the Exporter's Report form in 1976 and concluded: "The design of the form used . . . appears to reflect Department decisions to avoid all tabulations of data not strictly required under law. . . . It is difficult to imagine how the Department of Commerce intended to check to see if exporters were filing reports as required, let alone performing accurate tabulations of the results."

Nor did the reporting forms measure the full magnitude of the Arab states' boycott of Israel until 1976. From 1965 to 1976, only exporters were required to file boycott reports; banks, insurance companies and freight forwarders were exempted, although the language of the Export Administration Act explicitly called for all domestic concerns to submit reports. Numbers tell the story: from 1965 to 1975, some 15,000 reports were filed by U.S. companies. But once Congress ordered the Commerce Department to require all firms to answer the questionnaires, more than 22,000 were filed in just the first nine months of 1976.

Why was the Exporter's Report form so ineffectual and its distribution so limited prior to 1976? One answer might be that the Commerce Department, often criticized as being the mouthpiece of big business, circulated the draft form of the report for comment only to the Machine and Allied Products Institute and the World Trade Department Automobile Manufacturing Association, Inc. Commerce later admitted to the Office of Management and Budget that no nongovernmental group, other than these privileged two, had played any role in designing or reviewing the reporting form, or suggesting to whom it should be sent.

Beyond Commerce's pattern of acquiescence to business interests, one Federal agency actually took part in the boycott. Du Pont was somewhat startled when, in 1969, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Saudi Arabia included boycott stipulations in an order for film. Du Pont wrote in its Exporter's Report: "We are surprised that the U.S. Government would participate in a restrictive trade practice." Jack Mahon, a counsel for the Corps, told us, "The practice during our early stages of contracting, before the 1977 [antiboycott] law, was that if a requirement was requested [by an Arab country] we complied at that time. . . . It certainly was a dichotomy, though, between the stated U.S. policy on one side and what the Corps did on the other. . . . I am certainly not going to try and defend it." DuPont, whose chairman, Irving Shapiro, spearheaded the successful drive for antiboycott legislation in 1977, itself

complied with a boycott request involving the sale of centrifuge equipment to Kuwait, according to a form the company filed in April 1976.

Such widespread compliance stemmed from the Commerce Department's earlier fear of "undesirable side effects" from a strong antiboycott law. Yet that fear has proved to be unfounded, both here and abroad. Sweden, West Germany and the Netherlands have experienced solid growth of Arab trade despite the strong antiboycott positions taken by their governments. While *U.S. News & World Report* warned in a 1976 article of trade losses that would result from a tough antiboycott measure, trade with Arab states has actually increased.

"I don't think that the law hurt American companies," said Representative Benjamin Rosenthal, Democrat of New York, a major supporter of the act. "We had the president of Mobil come down to Congress and say the world would come to an end if the antiboycott laws passed. It just wasn't so. One thing I've learned in life is that everyone has a price—even the Saudis."

Yet for twelve years the U.S. government was bought cheap. The Commerce Department caved in to threats by Arab states and encouraged U.S. firms to comply with the boycott. According to Frank Weil, "If Commerce, even without the force of law, had pursued the policy, we may not have even needed the [1977] law." □

SOME WHO SAID "NO," AND SOME WHO SAID "YES"

Some 152 companies, or slightly less than 10 percent of the 1,600 companies reporting, took Congress at its word and refused to comply with boycott requests. (Another 10 percent of the companies indicated on their Exporter's Reports that a third party would respond to boycott requests, usually the company's shipper or insurer.)

The Commerce Department reports indicate that Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia were far and away the most active participants in the boycott among the Arab states.

In 1966, the Western Union Company received a letter from the Central Office for the Boycott of Israel in Damascus. The letter noted that L.M. Broomall, a Western Union vice president, had recently been elected a member of the National Board of the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This, the letter pointed out, was a violation of the Arab boycott of Israel. In order for Western Union to maintain good relations with Arab states, the company should furnish, within three months, Broomall's letter of resignation from the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce plus a letter from the organization accepting his resignation. Otherwise, Western Union would face a total ban on trade with Arab states.

The letter cautioned Western Union not to consider the request "according to misleading Zionist propaganda, as

an attempt to exert pressure on you or interference in the affairs of your company."

Western Union informed the boycott office that it would not comply with this request—and managed to retain the Arab states' "good will."

The Zenith Corporation, however, which lacked the near monopoly power of Western Union, was not so fortunate. Zenith refused a boycott request in 1965, saying that it would comply with U.S. policy. The company was promptly blacklisted and remains so to this day. "We took a big beating," said a company spokesman. "We had a watch company that was hurt very badly by the blacklist. . . . We no longer have that company."

The American Jewish Congress brought a successful suit against the Commerce Department in 1977 which disclosed that several U.S. companies had received blatantly anti-Semitic requests from Arab states. The Central Scientific Company accepted an invitation to bid from Syria that contained a paragraph providing for cancellation of the contract "if the contractor relied upon suspected persons in executing his obligations, in particular Jewish." Beck International filed visa applications for fifteen of its employees bound for Saudi Arabia and granted a Saudi request that a statement of membership in a Christian church be supplied for each employee.

M.G. & S.S.

AN EXCHANGE.

(Continued From Page 362)

chik, I.P.S. 'created the Center for National Security Studies.' It did not. I.P.S. had nothing to do with creating the center." My source on this point was Barnett. I asked him if C.N.S.S. was an I.P.S. "spinoff," i.e., a group that began as a part of I.P.S. and then became formally independent. He replied: "Well, in a sense it was. He [Robert Borosage] was here earlier, and it was an idea some of us had. I was involved in the original discussion with the Field Foundation." (Borosage, an I.P.S. staffer, became the first director of C.N.S.S. before returning to I.P.S. to become its director.)

In sum, every one of Neier's criticisms of my article rests on a distortion, except for the point about C.N.S.S., on which either Neier is uninformed or someone—either Neier or Barnett—has not spoken truthfully. Before Neier next condescends to lecture the editors of *The New York Times Magazine* on the subject of standards of accuracy, it would become him first to endeavor to raise his own, which do not compare at all favorably.

Joshua Muravchik

NEIER REPLIES

New York City

Let us see how well Joshua Muravchik does

on the five points to which he has chosen to respond:

(1) Muravchik concedes that, in response to a question about imperialism, Richard Barnett told him that the "cause and analyses" of American and Soviet behavior are slightly different but that the "effects are not different" (or "not too different" in Muravchik's not too different version). Yet Muravchik's *New York Times Magazine* article selectively quoted Barnett to convey the impression that Barnett's view of the Soviet Union was diametrically opposite to what Barnett told him.

Muravchik does the same with respect to

Barnet's view of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He quotes a sentence in which Barnet gives his view as to why the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan but leaves out Barnet's characterization of the invasion. As I noted in my May 30 article, Barnet published a long article in *The New Yorker* (it appeared just a few weeks prior to Muravchik's article in *The Times Magazine*) that discussed "Soviet aggression against Afghanistan." The word "aggression" is, of course, the very word Barnet applied to the United States in Vietnam.

(2) Muravchik wrote in *The Times Magazine*, as he repeats here, that "Barnet and some of his colleagues have also praised postwar Vietnam and Cambodia under Pol Pot." He says here, as he told me on the phone when I called him about this, that "no reader would have made the mistake, that Neier pretends he made, of inferring that [Muravchik] had accused Barnet of supporting Pol Pot." As I wrote in *The Nation*, this is analogous to saying that if I wrote, "John and some of his friends traveled to Spain and Portugal," a reader could not reasonably conclude that I meant to say that John traveled to Portugal.

Muravchik could have written something like this: "Barnet has praised postwar Vietnam, and some of his colleagues have also praised Cambodia under Pol Pot." That version would not have conveyed the impression that Barnet praised Cambodia under Pol Pot.

Given the care with which Muravchik selected quotes and phrased sentences so as to paint a particular picture of the Institute for Policy Studies, I have to assume that the way he constructed this sentence was deliberately misleading. My view is reinforced by my phone conversation with Muravchik, in which he pointed out, as I noted in *The Nation*, that the sentence I found misleading has "a compound subject and a compound object."

Connecting "colleagues" of Barnet with support for the Pol Pot regime did not suffice for Muravchik, perhaps because Barnet has had hundreds of colleagues at I.P.S. over the years. No doubt many of them have said foolish things. Barnet himself, on the other hand, is one of the mainstays of I.P.S. Making it appear that he praised the Pol Pot regime damages I.P.S., which, apparently, was Muravchik's intent.

(3) The most extreme of Muravchik's distortions in his *Times Magazine* article was his attempt to show that Richard Barnet compares the human-rights record of the United States unfavorably with the record of the Soviet Union.

As I pointed out in my article, Barnet has written at length about Soviet abuses of human rights in his book *The Giants*, which is about the Soviet Union and the United States but which has almost nothing to say about human-rights abuses in the United States. Muravchik told me on the phone

that he was familiar with this book, but he did not choose to refer to it. Instead, he chose to quote a newspaper article by Barnet published some time prior to *The Giants* because it used the word "decline" in talking about respect for human rights in the United States and the word "improvement" in discussing the human-rights situation in the Soviet Union. Muravchik wrote in *The Times Magazine* that the "distinction between the two superpowers in the area of human rights" that Barnet sees is this distinction between "decline" and "improvement."

If Muravchik had wanted to discuss fairly the distinction Barnet sees between the United States and the Soviet Union in the area of human rights, he would have quoted or summarized the criticisms Barnet makes of human-rights abuses in each country. Instead, Muravchik's method is analogous to taking a statement that the standard of living in Switzerland is declining and putting it alongside a statement that the standard of living in Haiti is improving and attributing to the author of these two statements the view that the Haitians are better off than the Swiss. As Muravchik says in his rebuttal to me, "This comparison is grotesque." But it is Muravchik who is guilty of attributing to Barnet this grotesque comparison; it is not Barnet who says that the distinction must be seen in terms of decline or improvement.

Muravchik says that he "did not 'shade . . . the meaning' " of what Barnet wrote about "improvement" in the Soviet Union. The sentence from Barnet that Muravchik quoted in his *Times Magazine* article follows, with the words Muravchik deleted appearing in italics: "Ironically, one area of the world that can point to some improvement in its human rights record over the past generation is the Soviet Union, which *despite its sorry record in implementing 'socialist legality'* is far from the giant concentration camp that Stalin made it." Muravchik did not leave in Barnet's harshest words about the Soviet Union. The reference to "a giant concentration camp" is to the Stalin past. It is Barnet's comment about the Soviet present—"its sorry record in implementing 'socialist legality' "—that is to the point in assessing the current human-rights situation and in setting the context in which the use of the word "improvement" becomes clear. . . . Including what Barnet has to say about the present situation in the Soviet Union would have conflicted with Muravchik's point that the distinction Barnet sees between human rights in the United States and in the Soviet Union is the distinction between decline and improvement. That is why there was not enough room in Muravchik's 6,000-word article for the eight words deleted from Barnet's sentence that encapsulate his view of the present human-rights situation in the Soviet Union.

(4) Here is what Muravchik wrote in *The Times Magazine*:

"I.P.S. has not addressed human rights problems in Cuba. But I.P.S. is certified, as a nongovernmental organization, to bring violations to the attention of the United Nations. Last year, it did so, alleging a "consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights" by the United States, Chile and Guatemala.

It seems to me reasonable to infer from this passage that Muravchik believes that the allegation that the United States, Chile and Guatemala are engaged in a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights, with no reference to Cuba, is intended to show that I.P.S. criticizes violations of human rights in the Americas but leaves out Cuba. Yet the document that omits reference to Cuba is entitled "Legal Process and the Protection of the Lands of Native Peoples," and the sentence from which Muravchik quoted reads, in its entirety: "The treatment of indigenous peoples in the Americas, e.g., Guatemala, Chile and the United States of America, constitutes a consistent pattern of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms spanning at least two hundred years." I pointed out in my May 30 article that "As Muravchik says, there is no reference to Cuba. Nor, for that matter, is there any reference to Argentina. They are among the countries of the Americas that solved their problems with indigenous peoples long ago by wiping them out. . . ." [Muravchik] made use of a document referring only to indigenous peoples in such a way as to make it appear, falsely, that it was a general critique of the human-rights situation in the Americas from which Cuba was improperly omitted.

(5) Muravchik made the flat statement that I.P.S. "created the Center for National Security Studies." I made an equally flat statement: "It did not." My statement is correct. Muravchik's statement is incorrect. Muravchik now says the evidence on which he relied for his false assertion was that Barnet told him he was "involved in the original discussion with the Field Foundation." As it happens, along with many others, I was also involved in the original discussion with the Field Foundation. It would be false, however, to assert that I created, or that the American Civil Liberties Union (for which I then worked) created the center. . . .

In sum, it is clear that Muravchik carefully selected and arranged quotes from Barnet and others to make it appear that the Institute for Policy Studies is a relentless apologist for the Soviet Union, Cuba and the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia. Portions of quotes that contradicted this view of I.P.S. were excised. When Muravchik found nothing to fit this view of I.P.S.—as in the case of Barnet and the Pol Pot regime—he composed his sentences so as to forge the missing links. To repeat what I have previously written about all this, it is contemptible slander.

Aryeh Neier

BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Rouse the Stupid and Damp the Pert

CHARLES NEWMAN

SIXTY STORIES. By Donald Barthelme. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 464 pp. \$15.95.

I had been plotting arch romance without knowing it . . .

—Henry James

Donald Barthelme is our most imitated writer today, fully as much as J. D. Salinger was twenty years ago—which is only to say that one index of genius is the extent to which it prompts redundancy in lesser talents. And this retrospective collection, which covers Barthelme's entire career, is the most satisfying way of reading him, removed from his usual literary context of fey cartoons, self-parodying ads, poems longer but less poetic than his stories, and his imitators' fictions, which might be defined as the absence of plot, character and consequence—only *situations*.

Barthelme is certainly no realist; we can have no more dissimilar reactions to contemporary experience and its literary embodiment than to compare the solemnity of Saul Bellow, say the conclusion of *Mr. Sammler's Planet*:

He was aware that he must meet, and he did meet—through all the confusion and depraved clowning of this life through which we are speeding—he did meet the terms of his contract. The terms of which, in his inmost heart, each man knows, as I know mine. As all know. For that is the truth of it—that we all know, God, that we know, that we know, we know, we know . . .

with the coruscating irony of Barthelme in *Snow White*, parodying Henry James:

Try to be a man about whom nothing is known, our father said, when we were young. Our father said several interesting other things, but we have forgotten what they were. . . .

Charles Newman is the author of three novels, *New Axis* (Houghton Mifflin), *The Promisekeeper* (Simon & Schuster) and *There Must Be More to Love Than Death* (Swallow). He has recently completed *The Aura of the Post-Modern*.

Our father was a man about whom nothing was known. Nothing is known about him still. He gave us the recipes. He was not very interesting. A tree is more interesting. A sentence is more interesting. A canned good is more interesting.

But it would be wrong to delimit Barthelme's worth by consigning him to the highly cerebral and balefully ironic strain of currently fashionable humor. Nothing is quite so tired as a tired novelty, and Barthelme's most vicious parodies are aimed precisely at those fashionable conventions of self-conscious cultural and linguistic relativism that are the residue of a long-exhausted avant-garde. In this sense, he is a truly regional writer, with an unerring ear for the elliptical discourse of the urban sophisticate going through the motions of the "intelligentsia."

Moreover, when read as a whole, the stories powerfully convey the heart-break of people struggling to communicate *through* a culture increasingly out of control, trivialized by competing jargons, until aggressive silence seems preferable to any verbalized experience.

Very often one "pushes away" the very thing that one most wants to grab, like a lover. . . . The story ends. It was written for several reasons. Nine of them are secrets. The tenth is that one should never cease considering human love, which remains as grisly and golden as ever, no matter what is tattooed upon the warm tympanic page.

Here Barthelme surpasses that irony which Freud thought to be an inferior subspecies of the comic, since, in his words, "Irony can only be employed when the other person is *prepared* to hear the opposite, so that he cannot fail to feel an inclination to contradict"; and it is only when Barthelme plays openly to an audience that is totally prepared to make a joke out of anything that the stories fail. In an art so compressed and subtly grotesque, the one-liner pun generally has unsatisfying effect, though he yields to that impulse less frequently as his career progresses. At his best, Barthelme expresses humor as defiance. "One refuses to go under suffering," Freud says, "activates his ego against the real world, and vic-

toriously upholds the pleasure principle"—in other words, play as the ultimate seriousness. Barthelme exploits the gap (crevasse is perhaps a better word) between the abstraction of literary discourse and what's left of the felt life and mental sanity. He gives us people whose social identity and psychology is not something to be inferred from their speech but *is* their speech.

It is a commonplace that American comedy has moved from that based upon innocence to that of savage sophistication, and in fact its relentless humor is undoubtedly what is unique and distinctive about American writing of the last twenty years. But there is more to it than that. The hallmark of a Barthelme story is that it is *essentially unparodyable*. Think of the consequences of this—an art that will not yield to further mimicry. Within its own framework, it can be neither fully challenged nor assimilated; it is the end of the road of interiority.

Constance Rourke, in her classic study of American humor, saw, even in 1931—when American literature was still in awe of English literature—that

American character is still split into many characters . . . the comic upset has often relaxed rigidities which might have been more significant if taut; individualism has sometimes seemed to wear away under a prolonged common laughter. The solvent of humor has often become a jaded formulae, the comic rebound automatic—"laff that off"—so that only the uneasy habit of laughter appears with acute sensitivity and insecurity beneath it as though too much had been laughed away . . . the comic rejoinder has become everyman's tool.

This is a criticism that can fairly be applied to Barthelme's work. But Rourke goes on to say that "though extravagance has been a major element in all American comedy, and though extravagance may have its incomparable uses with flights and inclusions denied the more equable view, the extravagant vein in American humor has reached no ultimate expression."

With Barthelme, however, it is clear that the vein *has* reached a type of "ultimate expression," with all the risks and virtues that implies. And it is to miss the point to view his work as merely a surreal esthetic response to the

ETC I I R D A R Y

silliness of modern life. Mark Twain himself noted that English comedy and French wit were dependent on their *subject matter*, while American humor relied on the *manner* of its telling.

Donald Barthelme's manner represents a kind of culmination of national humor, and in its distanced burlesque and profound melancholy it underscores a society on the knife edge. □

Democratic Voices

JACKSON LEARS

LITERARY DEMOCRACY: The Declaration of Cultural Independence in America. By Larzer Ziff. The Viking Press. 333 pp. \$20.

Democracy is a word in need of a long vacation. It has been used too often and too rapidly by so many pettifogging authoritarians that it threatens to collapse with meaninglessness. But since we are stuck with it, it is heartening to see an attempt on the left, most notably in Sheldon Wolin's journal *democracy*, to revive serious debate about the meaning of democratic politics.

Larzer Ziff's *Literary Democracy* (excerpts of which have appeared in Wolin's journal) embodies the cultural dimension of that revival. It is literary history of a kind now sadly out of fashion. Free of the deconstructionist critic's faith in self-referential texts and the positivist historian's obsession with measurable data, the book focuses on the relationship between great writers and their social milieu—in this case, the link between the classic American writers (Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman) and the wave of democratic nationalism that crested during the period of their greatest work, the 1840s and 1850s. Ziff wants to show that these writers were the products and articulators of a new democratic culture that was just then declaring its independence from European tradition.

In many ways, *Literary Democracy* is a resounding success. Without invoking sign systems or sociological models, Ziff casts historical light on major writers as well as on lesser ones such as the Gothic novelist George Lippard and the Tennessee humorist George Washington Harris. He also provides a new

way of looking at antebellum culture as a whole. From its inception, the book's ambitions are impressive, seeking as it does to demonstrate "certain precise connections, literary as well as biographical, between the American democracy and its first great body of imaginative writing." In general, Ziff is also concerned with uncovering "the social origins of great writing." But the quest for "precise connections" and "social origins" falls short of the mark.

To be sure, unlike most earlier literary historians, Ziff acknowledges that the antebellum United States was a capitalist political economy and also a democratic polity. He discusses Melville's critiques of alienated labor (in *Typee* and "The Tartarus of Maids"), Harris's clear view of class exploitation and Lippard's lurid vision of Philadelphia in thrall to a lascivious ruling-class conspiracy. Yet these are isolated observations rather than parts of an integrated approach and, more often than not, Ziff falls victim to the view that antebellum society was an undifferentiated "democracy." For all that, he rarely gives in to such simplifications without struggling to resist them, and in the end he gives us a book that, despite its faults, is extraordinarily sensitive to the varieties and contraries in American culture. *Literary Democracy* reveals that "old-fashioned" literary history can be intellectually challenging without losing elegance or moral passion.

Ziff's success is due, in part, to the sensitivity of his ear. His texts capture spoken as well as written language; his authors constantly address actual or imagined audiences. According to current critical fashion, the idea that there is actually a human voice behind a written text (let alone an audience for it) is hopelessly reactionary. Ziff, like his great predecessor F.O. Matthiessen, knows better. "We are often able to hear an actual speaking voice behind Emerson's words," Matthiessen wrote some forty years ago. Of course, Emerson was a public man, a lecturer. But one can hear other voices in Ziff's pages

as well: the deadpan drawl of Harris, the swaggering Shakespearean rhetoric of Melville, the mad rationality of Poe, the "prophetic screams" of Whitman, who chants the inadequacies of language even as he celebrates "My own voice, orotund, sweeping, final. . . ." However problematic the authors' allegiance to their native land, they refused to join, as Ziff puts it, "that fine old firm, English Literature International." Expressing "psychological concentration" rather than stylistic cultivation, their voices were characteristically American.

Ziff's voice, too, pervades this book. Like Emerson, he knows how to spice the Latinate diction of formal writing with pungent Saxon monosyllables—"brag," "scrim," "fake." He describes Harris's audience as "suspicious, pawky, lower-class observers," and notes that Longfellow's "Hiawatha," despite its New World theme, was hardly "some fancied grunt of American nativism." And Ziff has a nice sense of proportion. He shares Hawthorne's skepticism about "the glassy-eyed and bearded" who were clustered in Emerson's transcendentalist circle. While Ziff recognizes the transcendentalists' symbolic importance as a beacon for would-be intellectuals in early America, he refers to them throughout the book as "the Concord bores."

This healthy disdain reflects one of Ziff's most salutary accomplishments: his recognition that, even in the antebellum years, there was a great deal of cultural ferment outside the empyrean realm of eastern Massachusetts. Far more than most general interpretations of early American literature, *Literary Democracy* explores regional and social alternatives to New England Victorianism. One result of this catholicism is Ziff's brilliant chapter on Poe, who emerges as the perfect embodiment of Tocqueville's "individualism," the underside of democracy. Orphaned and deracinated, Poe was locked into the nightmare of his own fantasies and was therefore all the more able to penetrate the mass fantasies of his society: reason, progress and the natural goodness of man. Also remarkable is Ziff's chapter on Harris. I last encountered Harris when I was a student in an undergraduate survey course in which his work was presented as an example of "Southwestern humor" written in hillbilly dialect. Ziff's Harris is an altogether different character, a shrewd

Jackson Lears is the author of the forthcoming No Place of Grace: Anti-modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920 (Pantheon).

folk critic who unmasks the class basis of Victorian self-righteousness and celebrates a rough equality between the sexes. "His world," Ziff writes, "is one of poverty, illiteracy, and physical exertion; one in which sexual activity is a welcome outburst of the troubled self." Harris's hardscrabble farmers inhabit a realm of "barely repressed passion," far more troubling and compelling than the charming region of local color celebrated in literary anthologies. It comes as no surprise that both Mark Twain and William Faulkner admired Harris's stories.

Some of Ziff's other forays outside the "classic" canon are less satisfying. His chapters on Margaret Fuller and Harriet Beecher Stowe, especially, are derivative and disappointing. He has filled the Fuller chapter with many long quotations from Tocqueville on "the superiority of their women," but he has overlooked recent historical literature on women's changing social role in the early nineteenth century. Ziff's discussions of these two women seem too dutifully done, as if he were engaged in a kind of scholarly affirmative action.

What is more disappointing about *Literary Democracy* is the sketchiness of its historical backdrop. The problem stems, in part, from the vagueness of the "democracy" Ziff seeks to describe. Too often it seems not much more than a disembodied slogan, and too often Ziff overlooks how thoroughly democratic ideals were shaped by capitalist social relations. He accepts Emerson's naïve evaluation of the Jacksonian Democrats as representatives of "the people against property." In actuality, the leading Jacksonians were not working-class egalitarians but ambitious entrepreneurs seeking freedom to pursue profits. Their "democratic" ideology was indissolubly linked to market values; it exalted the pursuit of economic gain at the expense of equality.

The genuine democrats in the book are the writers themselves—not only Whitman, with his veneration for "the average life . . . the concrete man," but also Hawthorne, who defended the local and the traditional against the abstract schemes of "improvement" offered by liberal reformers and economic nationalists, and Melville, who turned East rather than West, seeking the comradeship of sailors rather than the "enforced solitude and enforced cheerlessness" of a quest for success on the

moving frontier. These idiosyncratic democrats defined their stance in opposition to the "democratic" mainstream.

The dominant drift of the antebellum United States was not toward a democratic culture but toward a mass-marketed counterfeit of it. By the 1850s, a national publishing apparatus had emerged to meet the needs of a new mass audience. The most popular authors were not those who challenged that audience but those who appealed to its unexamined pieties: not the early Emerson of the "Divinity School Address" but the later Emerson of the uplifting Chautauqua lecture; not Whitman the bard of barbarism but Longfellow the domesticator of European convention; not Hawthorne but the "scribbling women" he despised. By far the most popular author of the 1850s was Susan Warner, the Jacqueline Susann of her day. Warner's *The Wide Wide World* went through sixty-seven printings, sold 500,000 copies and dramatically demonstrated the cash value of sentimental formula fiction in the emerging "democratic" culture. Literary democracy, almost from the

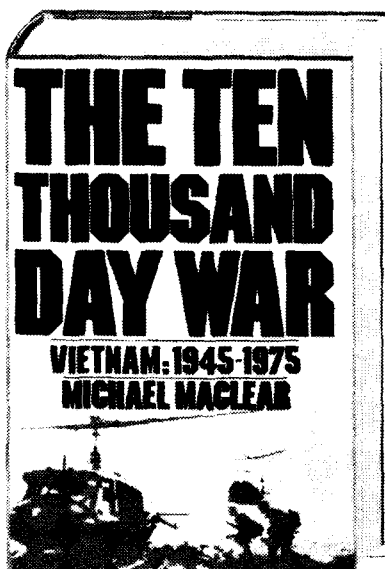
outset, was limited and defined by the literary marketplace.

Ziff knows this, but doesn't emphasize it enough. If he had, he would have clarified a central point: that the best American literature was rooted from the start in an adversary relationship to the dominant, capitalist culture. These authors were not proto-Marxists but true conservatives. Far from mouthing elitist critiques of popular genres, nearly all ended by lamenting the decline of democratic possibilities in a nation on the make. But Ziff mutes their pessimistic conclusions.

Despite these difficulties, *Literary Democracy* remains an exciting, provocative book, the most challenging reading of our classic literature that has appeared in recent years. Ziff's vigorous style, his adventurousness and his personal engagement with writers and issues make it easy to forgive the occasional lapses of his argument. Above all, *Literary Democracy* is an honest, searching attempt to restore some historical meaning to democratic ideals. The attempt succeeds because Larzer Ziff is not only a partisan of democracy but a partisan of language. □

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Letter to Comrade B.

Dear Comrade Brezhnev,

I see by the newspapers that my book *The Promise of Eurocommunism* was one of five American books banned at the Moscow Book Fair. I thank you warmly, dear comrade, for this subtle help against neo-imperialism. Once again, I am awed by your insight into American society. Knowing that the Establishment—its newspapers, magazines, radio and TV—was systematically ignoring my book, stifling it by silence, you acted to stir up much-needed publicity; indeed, sales have shot up.

The way you did it was a lesson in classic Marxism. As Lenin taught us, you grasped the weak link in the enemy's chain of thought; you aimed for the Achilles' heel of the American media—its inability to resist anti-Soviet innuendo. On a small scale, you laid here the same kind of trap as you did in Afghanistan. There, at a cost of a few hundred Russian soldiers and a few million rubles, you lured our military-industrial complex into spending billions and billions on arms—thus plunging our society into a first-class economic mess and political crisis. Well done, comrade.

Of course, you and I are not fooling the Federal Bureau of Investigation a bit with this ban. Those boys are sure I am a stalwart neo-Stalinist; I not only support détente, nuclear disarmament and your foreign policy as against the Chinese but I also have steadily argued that Stalin (for all his foibles and cults) should be seen in historical perspective as a latter-day Peter the Great. Moreover, they know I receive royalties from you and several Eastern European countries on my other books. The F.B.I. considers me a secret policy maker for the American Communist Party. No, you are not fooling the Bureau with this ban.

However, you are confusing the American C.P., and that leaves me a lit-

tle out in the cold, as I still have a few old friends among its membership. True, some of them suspect me of being a Central Intelligence agent because of my wartime work in the Office of Strategic Services. They see my three-year stint in Federal penitentiaries for opposing President Truman's cold war as a clever ploy to enhance my radical-activist cover. Your ban feeds those suspicions. So please, dear comrade, won't you drop a flea in their ears? I mean, I know you don't control them, but they do respect you, and I imagine you exchange occasional letters. Assure them that I gave a photocopy of my manuscript on Eurocommunism to your U.N. mission (as I gave one to the Vatican, to three European Communist parties and to several Eastern European missions) so you could tell me if I had unwittingly offended anyone. While the others made some suggestions, you wisely kept silent, reserving your options in case I needed help. As I did.

Some of my friends do not fathom the full perspicacity of your behavior. They tell me the book was banned because it gives theoretical aid and comfort to restive elements in Eastern Europe and to the Polish renewal. I tell them: nonsense—the Poles don't need my book and you are fully aware of why those people are restive. Above all, they malign you and your country, because a great power such as the Soviet Union does not fear new ideas. Your country was born in revolution; its government is grounded in Leninism and thus knows firsthand the power of ideas as harbingers of social change. But the Soviet Union was suckled on change and knows its inevitability; it knows that freedom is the recognition of necessity.

In conclusion, dear comrade, we both agree with Pope John Paul II that the paramount duty of decent people today is to stop the nuclear arms race, disarm and achieve a lasting peace. I am delighted that you think *The Promise of Eurocommunism* furthers those goals and that you took vigorous, and inimitable, measures to push its distribution.

In the name of Marx, Engels, Lenin and John XXIII, I am,

Comradely yours,
Carl Marzani

Carl Marzani says he's proud of three things: he fought in the Spanish Civil War; he spent three years in a Federal penitentiary; and he was the first to translate Gramsci into English. His most recent book is The Promise of Eurocommunism (Lawrence Hill).

Original Sin

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

RICHARD NIXON: The Shaping of His Character. By Fawn M. Brodie. W.W. Norton & Company. 574 pp. \$18.95.

In our politics, a great deal changes, but Richard Nixon endures as malevolent presence and sufficient occasion of discord among comparatively honorable fellow citizens. Last year in *The Real War*, he returned to the rabid anti-Communism upon which his early triumphs over Jerry Voorhees, Helen Douglas and Alger Hiss were founded, just in time to stimulate the current Administration's dangerous chauvinism. This year at Duke University, Terry Sanford, a decent Southern politician turned academic administrator, may already rue his decision to enlarge the campus with the Richard M. Nixon library and museum. His faculty will probably discover other reasons to complain about the administrators' policies. But as the university's lawyers endlessly haggle with Nixon's representatives over the scale and location of the library and the terms of access to the donor's malodorous files and tapes, Sanford is quite likely to regret his decision to shift from the sweetness and light of electoral politics.

Even Richard Nixon serves a public purpose as a reminder of horrors past, and in this lies the major contribution of the late Fawn M. Brodie's meticulous psychobiography, *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*. Nostalgia, the sentimentalization of the past, is a vice of the elderly and a temptation to ambitious young historians determined to promote their fortunes by revising the judgments of their seniors. Because the 1980s threaten to be awful, the 1950s were not necessarily blissful. Several revisionist studies of the Eisenhower Presidency come perilously close to idealizing the General and celebrating the state of the union under his benign guidance. Ike's bad syntax, we are assured, was a ruse to deceive journalists and obscure his thoughtful plans for the national welfare. While John Foster Dulles traveled the globe

Robert Lekachman is a member of The Nation's Editorial Board and author, most recently, of Capitalism For Beginners (Pantheon).

constructing paper alliances and snorting defiance at the global Communist conspiracy, Eisenhower is now said to have kept his dragon on a long leash while conducting a prudent foreign policy. At home, the story goes, although he refused to descend into the "gutter" with Joe McCarthy, he quietly bided his time with the instinct of a master strategist. When the Wisconsin bully overreached himself by taking off after the Army, Ike deployed his secret weapon, none other than Joe's

sometime pal Vice President Nixon, to undercut McCarthy's Congressional support.

In the hands of less cautious revisionists, the reign of Eisenhower the Good was an Era of Good Feelings. Blacks, women and college students knew their place. The John L. Lewises and Harry Bridges retreated muttering from center stage, and dimmer union types supplanted them. Living standards rose steadily, recessions were brief and mild, and cheap mortgages enabled hordes of veterans to acquire their own homes. In middle management, men in gray flannel suits abounded. For

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sophisticates, life was dull, but the square majority never had it better.

There is some truth in this caricature of the decade as a Norman Rockwell *Saturday Evening Post* cover. For the white working and middle classes, prosperity was real. However, the politics of the 1950s were nasty episodes of loyalty and security investigations, blacklists and ruined careers, Congressional witch hunts and campaigns for office between superpatriots. In the judgment of many, John Kennedy "won" the 1960 debates with Nixon by appearing to be the tougher anti-Communist. Long after the Senate condemned McCarthy, stripped him of his chairmanship and encouraged him to drink himself to death, Nixon continued to campaign as the foe of internal subversion and external

Soviet aggression. Far more than McCarthy, he dominated the political style of the decade.

Fawn Brodie, the biographer of Thaddeus Stevens and Thomas Jefferson, tells the Nixon story clearly up to the Presidential years, in the detail justified by exhaustive consultation of documentary sources, oral history archives and 120 journalists, psychiatrists, Nixon intimates and Nixon enemies. One is no more likely to tire of her 574 pages than of salted peanuts. Although there are scarcely more surprises in the chronicle than in a can of Planters' finest, they are equally addictive. We hear again, as evidence of the man's chronic mendacity, that in his Checkers speech Nixon deliberately misstated his wife's name (Thelma Catherine, not

Pat) and the date of her birth (not St. Patrick's Day but the preceding day). We read again the disgusting particulars of the war of extermination against Voorhees in 1946 and against Douglas in 1950.

Those of us who have grown old along with Nixon, certain that the best is unlikely to be, will not find much that is new here. Brodie speculates inconclusively that the problem that induced Nixon to consult the quasi-psychiatrist Dr. Arnold Hutschnecker was sexual impotence. She is solidly certain that Hiss was guilty and that Chambers was a generally accurate accuser on the basis of Allen Weinstein's distinctly debatable *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* [see Victor Navasky, "The Case Not Proved Against Alger Hiss," *The Nation*, April 4, 1978]. She adds touches to the well-known tales of the cool Eisenhower-Nixon relationship, Nixon's friendship with Bebe Rebozo and his insensitive treatment of his wife.

Of course, Brodie wanted her study to be judged less as conventional biography than as psychological interpretation. However, her explanation of Nixon's character is as familiar as the external events of his career. The father, Frank Nixon, was a loud-mouthed, abusive bully whose punishments the young Nixon learned to avert by craft as well as by abject obedience. Mother Hannah, the "saint" of Nixon's maudlin farewell speech in August 1974, indulged herself in quietly "eviscerating" chats with her children on the subject of their failings. She preferred Richard's siblings to the ungainly Richard. For a stretch of three years, she left him to the untender mercies of his father while she tried vainly to nurse back to health the favored child, the tubercular Harold.

The love that his mother withheld, the mature Nixon sought from the electorate. The approval never forthcoming from his father, he again failed to evoke from an Eisenhower who refused to invite him and Pat to dinner at the White House and who seemed eager to dump him in 1956. To this endlessly frustrated search for love and approval, Nixon joined the rage of a man denied what is due to him. Why not destroy the enemies—Democrats, fellow Republicans, subordinates or North Vietnamese—who thwarted him? At crucial times he even turned his fury against himself; he could not help doubting his own worth. After his 1962 defeat by Pat Brown in

IN THE WHITE FOG

I've been stupid with her blindness,
the squall of her dreams,
whatever she thinks of as a tree.

We were always falling, down or out,
blind in a way. I think
it was an oak. The trick was

not to shinny back out
on the same slick limb.
If you climbed high enough, straight
up the trunk,
and crawled into a crow's nest, you were on
a ship. For years

you swayed in that high window
without a thought, without a sound,
the sun kindling

a hundred small fires
in the waves. You were bound
to discover land.

What you hadn't counted on
was someone going over,
at the last minute,

to that other world, the one
without a referent, in which
circuses and storms are variations

only in the weather.
You are sad, too far removed to do anything
but wave.

There is no rescue. Even now
someone is rocking in the white fog, like a buoy,
like a buoy, even now.

Arthur Smith

Arthur Smith was a winner of the "Discovery"—
THE NATION, '81" poetry contest.

the California gubernatorial race, he held his famous "last" press conference, at which he excoriated startled journalists and promised that they would no longer have Nixon to kick around. And as an episode of self-destruction, Watergate is a classic. Nixon not only failed to destroy the fatally incriminating tapes but he even issued an expurgated version which was itself damning.

Fawn Brodie's argument is plausible enough, though hardly novel, and open to the usual criticisms of the genre. In the practice of psychoanalysis, there is no substitute for the couch. To his credit, Dr. Hutschnecker has been ethically quiet about what he heard from his former patient. Moreover, similar circumstances evoke very different human responses. Hordes of boys grow up sadly in families with violent fathers and castrating mothers. They don't all turn into Richard Nixons. In

the sixteenth century, many Germans were constipated, but only Martin Luther rearranged the map of Christianity. James Mill was an unloving and disapproving martinet, but his son John Stuart became the liberal conscience of Victorian England, the saint of rationalism and the inspiration of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Quite often an adult oppressed in childhood enjoys making life miserable for his own sons and daughters and anyone else in a subordinate position. In other cases, the victim of early misery resolves to treat others better than he was treated himself. Splendid parents sometimes have disappointing children. Neglectful parents sometimes witness the spectacular success of sons and daughters whom they hurt rather than helped. Original sin is as good an explanation of individual wickedness, I am disposed to conclude, as parental misconduct. □

Tacho I Tacho II

RICHARD ELMAN

SOMOZA. By Bernard Diederich. E.P. Dutton. 352 pp. \$19.75.

This book is subtitled "And the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America." It would be more accurate to say its subject is the history of a dynasty that ruled Nicaragua for more than forty years. The first Anastasio Somoza, Tacho I, learned English when he fled his country and came to the United States after knocking up a family maid. Before becoming the head of Nicaragua's National Guard (a United States creation), he was, among other things, a used-car salesman and a counterfeiter. Once in power in Nicaragua, Tacho I quickly made the country into a profitable family business. He is best known for having ordered the assassination of Augusto Sandino, who had come down from the hills to Managua to settle his differences with the government.

Most writings about Nicaragua make it seem as if nothing happened between Sandino's insurrection against Tacho I in the 1930s and the Sandinist popular revolt of very recent history. One of the

strengths of Bernard Diederich's account in *Somoza* is the attention he gives to the many failed plots and insurrections and strikes against the Somozas during the bloody years of their rule. Tacho I was unrelenting toward the remaining elements of Sandino's army, but he also found himself opposed by conservatives, by students and by members of his own Air Force and National Guard.

Diederich's writing is sometimes uneven and is occasionally marred by the penchant for anecdotes characteristic of *Time* magazine (for which he has been Mexico City bureau chief), but there is much direct and careful reporting of the revolution itself, going back to the earliest actions of the Sandinist National Liberation Front (F.S.L.N.) and culminating in the last days of the dynasty, when Tacho II was in his bunker and the people were in arms everywhere. In some of this account, Diederich offers us the best record we have in English of the collapse of the dynasty and the painful birth of the new Nicaragua.

I have a very vivid recollection of a press conference with the U.S. Ambassador to Nicaragua in which Diederich demanded to know, with an indignation inappropriate for a *Time* correspondent, when the United States was going to withdraw its support for the massacre

Richard Elman is the author, most recently, of Cocktails at Somoza's: A Reporter's Sketchbook (Apple-wood Press).

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of Nicaraguans by Somoza and his son; and it was Diederich who was chosen by the world press to hand over a letter of protest to Tacho II on Nicaraguan television after the assassination of ABC reporter Bill Stewart.

Finally, a book like *Somoza*, by including so much more of Nicaraguan history than other recent books, manages to make us see what an immense accomplishment the Nicaraguan revolution actually was. □

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The Things 'People Don't Do'

RICHARD HOWARD

SECOND NATURE: A Novel. By Gordon Glasco. St. Martin's Press. 275 pp. \$13.95.

In attempting to account for the valor as well as the pallor of this decorous first novel, I must declare an interest: a stanza from a poem of mine appears as the book's epigraph; some of my attention to the text may have been pepped up by a desire to know how these twenty-six words illustrate the 275 pages that follow. Yet the novel has a fascination quite independent of poetry—an interest which resides, in fact, in its refusal of poetry, of language that insists on being there for its own sake. All the prose here, even that of reported speech, is expendable; it is meant to give way in the mind to information, but not to stand fast against the current of Replaceable Discourse. Gordon Glasco appears to have taken not my poem but part of an Auden sonnet for his subject: "learn/how to be plain and awkward, how to be/one after whom none think it worth to turn,/for to achieve his lightest wish, he must/become the whole of boredom . . . among the Just/be just, among the Filthy filthy too. . . ." Glasco has presented—in fifteen meaty chapters of the kind of realism (preparation of food, driving of cars, observation of weather) we have come to expect from television—the Disintegration of a Marriage. The successful 40-year-old surgeon (whose trade is discussed in harrowing piecemeal), the mutely aspiring wife and the knowledgeable, bratty children are called upon to endure hard revelations and disclosures as their easy Los Angeles existence withers and falls from them, exposing the rudiments of autonomy as the book ends in a welter of separation, adultery, divorce and a certain acceptance of the husband's sorrowing homosexuality, of the wife's tonic loneliness.

Glasco is very diligent about his unravelings, even as he is diffident about his prose. No glamour here, nothing to keep you reading on in search of that extractable nugget to report elsewhere. The only "device" the

author permits himself is the cinematic one of cross-cutting, that alternation of simultaneous scenes which Flaubert first employed in *Madame Bovary* and which has subsequently enlivened so many B-pictures. Except for this not exactly patented feature, *Second Nature* operates, so to speak, entirely by a kind of intermittent stream of consciousness, in the course of which a good deal of the stuff gets spilled—scattered around, as it were.

What is it, then, that gives this book such a powerful emotional effect? Why am I so moved by its quality in general, and so dubious about its strategies in particular? I think "it" must be precisely the novel's willingness to submit to the possibilities of tedium in order to find out how these things happen, these things that Hedda Gabler's husband told us "people don't do." I am disingenuous in alluding to Gabler and *Bovary*, for what is at the core of Glasco's text is not the discovery by a middle-aged physician and his wife that he's gay ("Are you telling me you've caught an overnight case of homosexuality? That overnight at the age of forty you've up and turned into a faggot?") but the very submission to illusion and its exorbitant costs that Ibsen and Flaubert wove into the centers of their great designs. Marriage as mutual deception, sexuality as duck-blind—these have been, of course, the graduate-student abstracts of domestic realism for more than a century now, and Glasco has a place in that curriculum. But I have not read an American novel in a long time that is so insistently conscious of the pressures of what "everyone else" will do and say about the family unit, about the demonically private world of a "successful" couple. So dangerous to our novelists is the specter of "slick fiction" and "soap opera" that the risk is not often run.

Glasco assumes it gladly, and his sensitivity to "the things people say" serves his book well. The expectations of parents and servants, colleagues and friends, even children and dogs, do as much damage to the vexed "inner life" of Alan and Alexis Stegman (he is a reluctant Jew, she a lapsed Catholic—yes, it is a problem novel) as any duress they might bring to bear from within. Indeed, what is so touching about the novel, and what constitutes the claim I want to make for it without too much

Richard Howard's translation of Baudelaire's Flowers of Evil will be published next spring by David Godine.

drum-beating, is that the central characters are enabled, by the very literalness of their presentation, to discover how bleak and poor "within" has been all along, and thus to resolve upon doing otherwise: It is the movement outward of these blasted interiors that establishes the novel's force. The Stegmans remind me of Kafka's drawing of several crutches precariously propped against one another in an artful scaffolding, under which the novelist has written the word "Hopes."

Second Nature (ambiguities abound in that title, of course; most fruitful is the fear that what becomes second nature hides from us what the first nature may have been) does not take a sparkling course in order to arrive at its belated realization that our marriages are made in hell to prevent us from finding out who we are; that our work often disguises the nature of our spontaneous impulses, and that our withdrawal from shared contours is the dirty little secret of middle-class life (much of the denouement concerns a retaining wall the Stegmans are trying to build round their new house, which, before they move in, is sliding down a muddy canyon: *absit omen!*). Not sparkling but clear and deep. And one last note: this is the first novel I have read since Sanford Friedman's *Totempole* (1965) in which male homosexuality is treated as neither a disease nor a tar baby but entirely as the function of a character, as a structural member, if I may say so—not as a problem but as the solution to a problem, whereby nothing is left for Alan Stegman except a future he must improbably invent. Anything but secondary, the novel's nature begins, really, with its ending; Glasco has written about an Oedipus who does not blind but instead forgives himself (after all, he has vasectomies to perform). Which brings me back to those twenty-six words of mine that I am, finally, flattered to find where they are—the novel is the tribute prose pays to poetry—and to Auden's sonnet, which says that the novelist must "in his own weak person, if he can, dully put up with all the wrongs of Man." □

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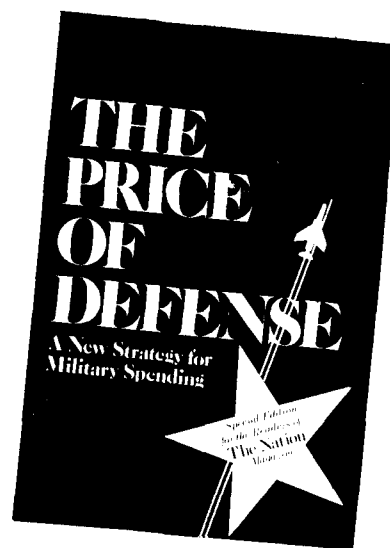
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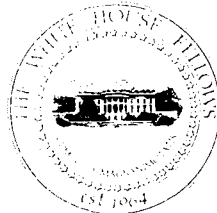
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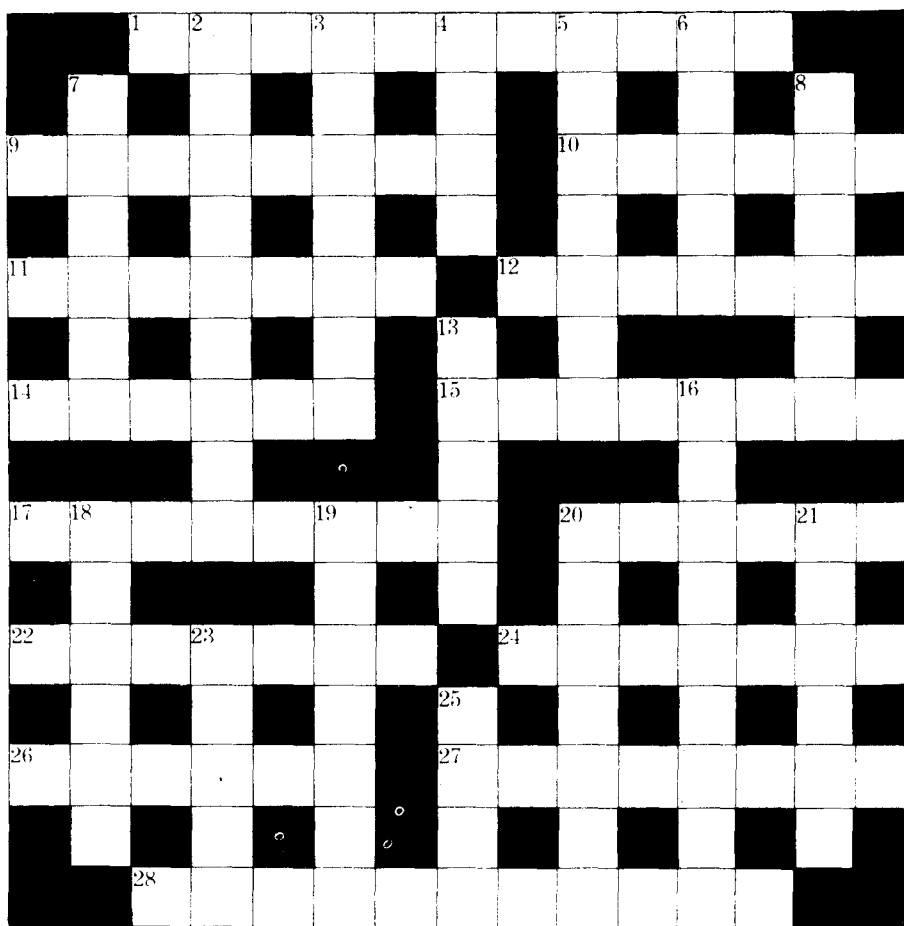
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ACROSS

- 1 and 11 across Dispatched one on a voyage of the mind only—where the air is pleasant for many. (11,7)
 9 But Jeanie didn't really stumble when she was seen doing it. (8)
 10 Red paint applied by him? (6)
 11 See 1 across
 12 Might a cow be made blinder so? (7)
 14 One agrees to give it in the condition mailed, possibly. (6)
 15 This sort of hay is old, but justly celebrated. (8)
 17 Cider's spilled about on here—but you might make allowances this way. (8)
 20 In codes, is the word for "stop" found? (6)
 22 See 5 down
 24 Not feeling well, with the stormy gale being like—well, there's a law against such things! (7)
 26 Sounds like a temporizing expression for one paying the rent. (6)
 27 A pawn may be at times, being already well along. (8)
 28 Are they responsible for sudden stock advances? (6,5)

DOWN

- 2 Did they once work in Pullmans, or do they

just send things out now? (9)

- 3 Gladiatorial equipment enabling an explosive spell on horseback inside. (7)
 4 Are they sometimes shot after arrest? (4)
 5 and 22 across Possibly 7 or 11 with the man's conservative following—but such is life, as far as things are concerned. (7,7)
 6 Reputedly gentle flower. (5)
 7 In reading them, one isn't surprised to find errors—with a few extra words about the cover for the top story. (6)
 8 and 21 Not kitchen drudges in the main—without pull, they might have been punished. (6,6)
 13 and 25 A brief farewell, and the reception might go on because of it. (5,4)
 16 Distinguished record, with the eagle of the sea coming to a bad end. (9)
 18 What precedes "Come All Ye Faithful" on the organ? (It was musical, at least.) (6)
 19 Pre-dawn description, proverbially. (7)
 20 Travelers were once told to stand and do it at times—some stores still do. (7)
 21 See 8 down
 23 Opera coats, perhaps. (5)
 25 See 13 down

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

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